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March 11, 2015

Overview of Adult Education Programs

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented to:
Assembly Education Committee
Hon. Patrick O'Donnell, Chair

Assembly Higher Education Committee
Hon. Jose Medina, Chair

Senate Education Committee
Hon. Carol Liu, Chair

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Historical Objectives

☑ **Adult Education Serves Multiple Purposes**

- Primary purpose is to provide adults with the precollegiate knowledge and skills they need to participate in civic life and the workforce.
- Services include instruction in basic (elementary and secondary) English and math, citizenship and English as a second language, vocational skills, and programs for adults with disabilities.
- Other purposes have included offering enrichment classes to older adults and providing instruction on effective parenting techniques.

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Historical Providers

☑ State Has Provided Adult Education Since 1850s

- State's first adult schools run by school districts.
- Community colleges later began offering adult education.
- In certain areas of the state, school districts and community colleges have both operated adult education programs but with little coordination among those programs.
- State law has been unclear regarding responsibility for adult education—including adult education in both segments' missions but not as a core responsibility for either segment.
- Other entities provide adult education on a smaller scale, including county offices of education offering courses to adults in correctional facilities; libraries and community organizations teaching literacy; and various social service, workforce, and other state agencies serving targeted student populations.

☑ Adult Schools and California Community Colleges (CCC) Remain the State's Main Providers

- These providers served more than 1.5 million students in 2009-10, which translates to about 550,000 full-time equivalent students. (CCC served two-thirds of all students and adult schools served one-third.)

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Historical Funding Model

☑ Adult Education Supported by State Funds, Federal Funds, and Fees

☑ State Funding for Adult Schools

- Historically, the state had a categorical program to fund adult schools.
- From early 2009 through 2012-13, the Legislature allowed school districts to use adult education categorical funds for any educational purpose.
- During this period of categorical flexibility, districts reduced spending on adult education by about half (from $635 million to an estimated $300 million to $350 million).

☑ State Funding for CCC

- CCC adult education instruction is funded through apportionments.
- CCC estimates that it currently spends $1.2 billion on adult education. More than three-quarters is credit instruction.

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Historical Funding Model *(Continued)*

☑ Federal Funding

- The California Department of Education (CDE) administers Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the federal adult education program.
- In 2014-15, WIA provided CDE with a total of $86 million in Title II funding.
- The CDE allocates these funds to adult schools, community colleges, and other providers based on student learning gains and other student outcomes.

☑ Adult Schools and CCC May Charge Fees

- Student fees vary by provider and program type:
  - No fees for CCC noncredit courses.
  - $46 per unit for CCC credit courses.
  - Fees range from none to full cost of instruction at adult schools.
- Providers also may charge students for books, supplies, and equipment.
- Estimated fee revenue in the low tens of millions of dollars for school districts and about $120 million for CCC.

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2013-14 Budget Charted New Course for Adult Education

☑ **Narrowed Scope of Adult Education to Five Areas of Instruction**

- Elementary and secondary basic skills.
- Citizenship and English as a second language.
- Education programs for adults with disabilities.
- Career technical education (CTE).
- Programs for apprentices.

☑ **Eliminated Adult Education Categorical Program and Folded Funds Into Local Control Funding Formula**

- Required school districts to maintain at least 2012-13 adult education spending level in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

☑ **Provided $25 Million in Planning Grants for Regional Consortia**

- CDE and CCC Chancellor's Office jointly awarded grants to school districts and community college districts to form regional consortia.
- Participants could include other providers (such as local libraries and community-based organizations).
- Consortia used planning monies in 2013-14 and 2014-15 to document existing services, identify unmet needs, and develop plans to improve adult education.

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2013-14 Budget Charted New Course for Adult Education *(Continued)*

☑ **Included Reporting Requirements and Funding Intent for 2015-16**

- Required CDE and CCC Chancellor's Office to provide progress reports to Legislature and Governor by March 2014 and March 2015.
- Legislation indicated intent to provide additional state funding to regional consortia beginning in 2015-16.

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2014 Legislation Addressed Various Other Issues

☑ **Tasks State Entities With Developing More Consistent Adult Education Policies**

- Chapter 545, Statutes of 2014 (SB 173, Liu), required CDE and CCC Chancellor's Office to submit recommendations pertaining to (1) common assessment policies for adult education students at adult schools and community colleges, (2) a consistent fee policy, and (3) a comprehensive accountability system (including the use of a single student identifier) by March 2015.
- Requires Commission on Teacher Credentialing and CCC Academic Senate to make recommendations on qualifications for adult education instructors in both segments by July 2016.
- Requires CDE and CCC Chancellor's Office to annually report adult education courses offered and the number of students served by regional consortia.

☑ **Requires Development of "Workforce Metrics Dashboard"**

- Chapter 385, Statutes of 2014 (AB 2148, Mullin), required the California Workforce Investment Board to help develop a central data repository.
- Dashboard would display information about state's investments in workforce development and outcomes of workforce education and training programs.
- Authorized CDE to collect social security numbers of adult students to track their participation and outcomes.

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Implementation Update

☑ Planning Grants Distributed to 70 Consortia

- $25 million in planning grants distributed to 70 consortia, consisting of 281 school districts and 72 CCC districts.
- Other adult education providers such as libraries and local workforce investment boards are participating in the consortia (more than 300 other providers were reported by consortia as participants).
- Consortia have generally used community college districts to define their regional service areas.
- Each consortium has designated a fiscal agent to distribute funding, with 15 designating school districts and 55 selecting CCC districts.

☑ Each Consortium Developed and Submitted a Regional Plan

- Plans show that adult education enrollment fell in all five priority areas during recession.
- Largest declines were in adult school enrollment. (See figure on page 9.)
- Independent assessment of plans found that common program challenges identified in plans include insufficient personnel and space for instruction, absence of consistent policies including assessment and placement policies, and shortage of basic skills training for students.

☑ CDE and CCC Chancellor's Office Released March 2015 Report

- See figure starting on page 10 for a summary of the report's recommendations and our assessment.

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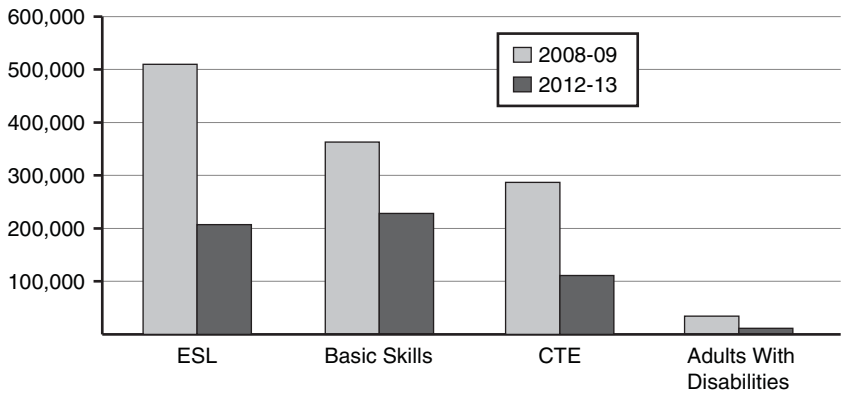
Implementation Update *(Continued)*

Adult School Enrollment Declined Under Categorical Flexibility

Annual Enrollment in Priority Areas[a]



[a] Adult schools did not provide data on apprenticeship training in their adult education regional consortia plans.

ESL = English as a second language and CTE = career technical education.

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Implementation Update *(Continued)*

Progress in Meeting Statutory Requirements

Statutory Requirements[a]	Data and Recommendations Included in March 1, 2015 Report	LAO Assessment
Regional plans must include:		
• Current service levels.	• Statewide 2012-13 service levels in five core areas of instruction as reported by consortia is 1.4 million individuals.	***Estimated Statewide Need Likely Overstated.*** Definition of "need" varies by consortium. Most consortia combine (duplicated) estimates of adults in a region with low educational attainment, limited English skills, disabilities, unemployment, and immigrant status. As a result, the total estimate of need is nearly 60 percent of the state's adult population age 18 to 64. The state needs a narrower definition of need that better reflects both the Legislature's intent in targeting adult education funds and likely demand for adult education services.
• Assessment of need for adult education programs.	• Estimated need for services statewide is 13.7 million individuals.	
• Plans to address gaps.	• Extensive discussion of challenges facing adult education providers in meeting regional needs.	
• Plans to integrate existing programs and create seamless transitions into postsecondary education or the workforce.		
• Plans to implement proven practices contributing to timely student success.	• Selected examples of promising practices identified by consortia.	
• Plans to collaborate in professional development for faculty and staff.		
• Plans to leverage existing regional structures including local workforce areas.		

(Continued)

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Implementation Update *(Continued)*

Statutory Requirements[a]	Data and Recommendations Included in March 1, 2015 Report	LAO Assessment
CDE and CCC report to include recommendations regarding:		***Report Falls Short.***
• Assessments to be used by school districts and community college districts for purposes of placement in adult education courses.	• Recommend creating and funding a joint initiative to develop an integrated assessment system. Notes that CDE and CCC will convene a working group to determine how to align the CCC Common Assessment currently under development with two common assessment instruments used by adult schools.	• The statute arguably is unclear whether the report was to identify specific assessment instruments for providers to use or make overall policy recommendations. In either case, the recommendations are vague and push the actual alignment work into the future.
• A comprehensive accountability system for adult education programs.	• Recommend developing a centralized system for reporting inputs and outcomes. • Recommend establishing common enrollment and outcome measures, including at minimum the following: – **Enrollment:** student headcount by term and year disaggregated by age, gender, and race/ethnicity; FTES, ADA, and course sections by each of the five program areas. – **Outcomes:** degrees and certificates attained, learning gains, employment outcomes, and transition to postsecondary education or training.	• Does not build upon existing centralized clearinghouse for monitoring outcomes of workforce education established through Chapter 385, Statutes of 2014 (AB 2148, Mullin).
• Whether fees should be assessed, and fee policy guidelines for school districts and community college districts. (The Legislature intends that registration and course fees be equivalent across all programs, not generate income beyond the cost of providing the courses, and should not create a barrier to access to adult education programs.)	• Recommend considering trade-offs between two identified options: (1) eliminating fees entirely for all adult education courses, or (2) establishing criteria to make fee levels fair and reasonable across the state, if not consistent.	• Although discussing trade-offs is helpful, the report could have gone further by proposing potential criteria for a new fee policy.
• The use of a single student identifier for school districts and community college districts.	• Recommend adult schools and community colleges "move toward a suite of common student identifiers."	• Does not specify actions segments would take to accomplish this, beyond noting that any changes would require them to modify fields in their databases.

(Continued)

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Implementation Update *(Continued)*

Statutory Requirements[a]	Data and Recommendations Included in March 1, 2015 Report	LAO Assessment
• Additional improvements in the adult education system.	• Recommend increasing service levels, full-time faculty, and dedicated funding; improving curricula and professional development; enhancing academic and social support to students; and reducing scheduling and financial barriers to access.	• Recommendations are general and do not prioritize.
	• Recommend maintaining support for consortia planning and administration.	• Reasonable to consider maintaining support for planning and administration.

[a] Statutory requirements contained in Chapter 48, Statutes of 2013 (AB 86, Committee on Budget), and Chapter 545, Statutes of 2014 (SB 173, Liu).
ADA = average daily attendance; CCC = California Community Colleges; CDE = California Department of Education; and FTES = full-time equivalent students.

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Governor's Proposal

☑ **Proposes $500 Million in Dedicated Funding for Adult Education**

- Funding would be distributed to 70 regional consortia as an annual block grant to support instruction in five priority areas.
- Defines consortia members as school districts, county offices of education, and community college districts.
- For 2015-16 only, would guarantee 2012-13 funding level to existing adult schools.
- CDE and CCC would allocate the remainder of the funds (and all funding in subsequent years) to consortia based on (1) the amount allocated to the consortium in the prior year, (2) the region's needs for adult education, and (3) the consortium's effectiveness in meeting those needs.
- Each consortium would form a seven-member allocation committee to distribute the funding to adult education providers within the region based on the consortium's service plan.

☑ **Requires Annual Consortia Plans**

- Each plan would evaluate adult education needs in region, assess current funding from all sources, and identify actions consortium members will take to improve efficiency and alignment of services.

☑ **Requires CDE and CCC to Submit Annual Report**

- CDE and CCC would report to the Department of Finance, the State Board of Education, and the Legislature with a summary of each consortium's adult education delivery plan, allocation schedule, and types and levels of service. Report also would include recommendations for better delivery and alignment of adult education services.

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Strengths of Governor's Proposal

☑ **Consortia Approach to Adult Education Consistent With Goal of Better Coordination**

- Involves a broad group of adult education stakeholders.
- Could foster better communication and coordination among adult education providers.
- Provides flexibility in how best to meet local needs.
- Sets forth expectations that consortia report types and levels of service, effectiveness in meeting need, and expenditure data to the state.
- Links at least a portion of annual funding to performance and need.

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Shortcomings of Governor's Proposal

☑ **Proposed Block Grant Does Not Include All Adult Education Funding**

- CCC apportionment funding.
- Various related CCC categorical programs, including CCC Economic Development, and Apprenticeship programs.
- WIA Title II, and other WIA funds used for the five core adult education areas, and federal Perkins CTE funding.

☑ **Proposal Lacks Significant Details**

- No explanation of what formal authority and accountability the allocation committees would have for directing the flow of state dollars.
- Unclear whether providers, regional consortia, or local allocation boards would be responsible for outcomes.
- No specific performance goals for adult education services.
- Minimal data collection requirements.

☑ **Unclear How Much Education the Proposal Would Fund**

- Unclear how many individuals the new program is intended to serve.
- No rules specifying maximum amount consortium can spend on a student.

☑ **Spending on Adult Education Not Necessarily Proportional to Needs**

- Including prior-year funding in statewide allocation formula perpetuates historical funding patterns at adult schools.

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LAO Recommendations

☑ **Fund Adult Education Block Grant With Several Modifications**

- Incorporate or better coordinate other sources of adult education funding into block grant.
- Require CDE and CCC to provide Legislature with statewide allocation plan by spring 2015.
- Clarify how funding within a consortia will be allocated.
- Set clearer goals and data requirements for consortia.
- Approve one-time funding guarantee but gradually shift statewide funding allocation to reflect need and performance.

☑ **Require Consistent Adult Education Policies**

- Require that CDE and CCC, in collaboration with the California Workforce Investment Board, by July 1, 2016, as a condition of funding:
  - Align assessment instruments and policies and develop integrated assessment system with shared data across providers.
  - Develop and begin using common student identifiers that permit tracking of all students across workforce education and employment systems.
  - Ensure providers contribute data to workforce metrics dashboard.