



# Digest

Digest means an item that has been through internal review of the Chancellor's Office and the review entities. The item now has form and substance, and is officially "entered into Consultation." The Council reviews the item and provides advice to the Chancellor.

## CONSULTATION

**Title:** Adult Education

**Date:** October 16, 2014

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**Background:**

Assembly Bill 86, Section 76, Article 3 charged the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) with jointly implementing an adult education planning process. The legislation appropriated \$25 million to distribute to regional consortia to develop plans with the shared goal of better serving the educational needs of California's adult learners.

The CCCCCO and CDE requested that California consortia submit interim reports detailing gaps and barriers present in their current provision of education to adult students. The CCCCCO and CDE requested that Hanover Research prepare a summary of key trends and commonly-mentioned gaps. Hanover noted four findings:

- **Consortia express strong concerns about creating and communicating educational pathways.** This includes outreach to students, the development of new services, and alignment, articulation, transition, and cooperation among consortia members.
- **The need to adequately prepare students for work, coupled with the fact that many students are not currently seeking traditional higher education, constitutes another primary area of concern.** Teaching basic skills, technology skills, and soft skills to students as part of a contextualized education is a commonly-suggested response to this need. Closer involvement with employers also emerges as a common gap in this area.
- **Many consortia cite a lack of professional educators necessary to achieve goals.** The reports often note that there simply are not enough teachers and counselors to satisfy the demand for education in many consortia. Many reports mention specifically having an insufficient number of available counselors.
- **Students, teachers, counselors, and other staff also report encountering many personal barriers and gaps.** These barriers and gaps include, but are not limited to: lack of transportation, lack of childcare services, literacy training, and the need for professional development.

Hanover noted several commonly-cited gaps, and their significance, in the current provision of educational services to adult students:

### ***INSUFFICIENT PERSONNEL AND INSUFFICIENT CLASSROOM LOCATIONS/STUDY AREAS***

Almost all consortia reports that included specification of gaps noted a lack of sufficient numbers of instructors, counselors, and other staff, as well as a lack of sufficient classroom locations and/or study areas for student accessibility. The lack of counselors often correlated with other common gaps, including inadequate understanding of student needs by education entities, and insufficient education and career guidance services available to students. The lack of teaching personnel and locations frequently coincided with transportation and class scheduling as limiting factors for student enrollment and work and childcare responsibilities.

The need for more distance and hybrid learning opportunities, combined with professional development and curricular development to support distance learning, is also commonly mentioned. Consortia noted these concerns frequently in the context of budgetary reductions and the implementation of “categorical flexibility” in educational funding in California.

### ***ARTICULATION, ALIGNMENT, TRANSITION, AND COOPERATION***

Relationships between providers involved in adult education are a common area of concern for consortia. Consortia frequently identified issues of articulation, alignment, transition, and cooperation in various forms, including:

- Ensuring classes from one provider lined up with those of another in terms of content progression and prerequisites;
- Making class/semester schedules align within consortia members to minimize waiting times;
- Building bridges between educational provision and employers’ needs;
- Reducing unjustified duplication of services;
- Being aware of service provision in other entities; and
- Creating a unified and cohesive adult education system

In some instances, members of a consortium appeared to have little experience working directly with one another, suggesting the need for a ground-up approach to create and cultivate relationships. Consortia cited the need not to lose students due to administrative differences and lack of inter-institutional knowledge. Similarly, consortia noted the need to consult with and involve employers for Continuing and Technical Education/Apprenticeships related to education-to-labor-market transitions.

Consortia also highlighted students’ lack of information as a common gap. Associated with this gap, consortia identified the need to have effective communication of educational pathways and available educational programs. Specifically, consortia mentioned having a lack of information regarding pathways for vocational ESL instruction and linking contextualized learning to workplace demands as gaps.

The reports from the consortia raised questions about how to track students given different assessment and ranking systems and simple lack of data sharing and related forms of cooperation.

Furthermore, consortia addressed the inadequacies of existing assessments. Therefore, consortia cited the need to adopt common evaluation measures and education-level intake assessments.

### ***BASIC SKILLS, WORK-PREPARATION SKILLS, AND SOFT SKILLS***

In terms of advancing students toward college, independent living, and employment, consortia often mentioned the need for more education in basic academic and life skills, work-preparation skills (including pre-apprenticeship training), and soft skills for employment (i.e., appropriate dress and self-presentation, interaction and communication with teams, time management and punctuality, applying for employment itself, etc.). Education in these areas appears to be a broad gap in provision, but particularly for disabled adults and those in CTE programs.

### ***TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION AND AVAILABILITY TO STUDENTS***

Technology education emerged as a common gap both in the sense of not providing sufficient training with computers and not having enough technological devices (computers, tablets, etc.) available to students. Concerns about technology were also voiced in a slightly different manner—while many consortia expressed a desire for greater online or hybrid education options, some acknowledged that students may lack the means to access such offerings. This gap relates primarily to insufficient infrastructure concerns. Consortia noted the need for both basic and advanced computer skills training for preparing students for employment.

### ***PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CURRICULUM INNOVATION***

The need for teachers to receive ongoing and broad professional development in adult education appeared in several AB86 areas, often tied to the need to utilize more technology in teaching (see above) and to implement innovative or updated curricula relevant to modern career opportunities and social developments. A few consortia mentioned concerns around the need to align adult education standards with those of the Common Core.

### ***APPRENTICESHIP AND CTE PROGRAMS***

Apprenticeship and CTE programs shared many similar gaps. Notably, many consortia indicated a total or near-total absence of apprenticeship opportunities. Consortia also regularly mentioned the need for English as a second language (ESL) CTE and contextualized education in general as a means to promote connections to employment and to address the disconnect that students may perceive between what they learn now and later workforce application. Consortia also mentioned a need for deeper connections to local employers to improve these areas. Finally, consortia identified a gap in the provision of shorter-term, stackable certificates that would enable faster responses to workplace demands and that are less immediately time-consuming than existing programs.

The above data by Hanover was presented to the 330 attendees at the AB 86 summit. Next steps include synthesizing the information gathered at the summit, reviewing SB 173, analyzing consortia reports due October 31, 2014, and developing the framework of the next report due to the Legislature.