

# California Adult Education Insider

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## Adult Education Symposium

The California Department of Education (CDE), in collaboration with the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NASCALL), has scheduled a national adult education symposium. Titled "Meeting of the Minds" it will be held December 9-11, at Sacramento's Sheraton Grand Hotel.

The symposium, whose theme is *Supporting Student Success: What Does Research Tell Us?*, is designed to connect researchers, practitioners and policy makers and provide opportunities to share current research findings and practitioner wisdom. It will address goals, accountability, efficacy, and efficiency in policy, practice, and research. The ultimate goals are to enhance literacy practice and increase student learning gains.

Sessions will be structured so that research presentations will be followed by discussions on implications for practice or policy.

For program highlights, registration, and lodging and travel details go to [www.researchtoppractice.org](http://www.researchtoppractice.org). Contact: California Adult Literacy Professional Development project (CALPRO), 916-286-8817.

## CCR Process Postponed

A new Coordinated Compliance Review process originally scheduled for launch this fall will be postponed another year, Superintendent of Public Instruction **Jack O'Connell** recently announced.

Districts slated for review this year will use a modified version of the existing process and will soon receive specific information and instructions to help them prepare for the modified review.

For the time being, districts are asked to disregard any correspondence received on the new CCR process, as the changes are not yet finalized and the documents are therefore inaccurate. Although a prototype exists, it does not factor in additional components required by law, such as the new requirements of No Child Left Behind. Info/contact: [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/cr/cc](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/cr/cc)

## New Consultant for Adult Ed. Office

The CDE's Adult Education Office has a new consultant: **Gloria Guzman-Walker** comes to her position with over 20 years of experience in education as a K-12 classroom teacher, resource teacher, and administrator.

Most recently, Ms. Guzman-Walker worked with the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy program, whose goal is to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by integrating adult education, early childhood education, parenting education, and parent and child interactive literacy. The program serves approximately 5,600 adults and 9,100 children. As the lead consultant in evaluation, professional learning, and the No Child Left Behind liaison, she brings a depth of knowledge in those areas as well as other expertise.

At Even Start, Ms. Guzman-Walker established a cadre of Family Literacy Coaches to provide technical assistance to new grantees; established nationally-certified family literacy trainers; and implemented a strong evaluation process to demonstrate NCLB Even Start Performance Indicators.

Now, with the CDE, she hopes to assist adult agencies help adult learners realize their goals and "looks forward to working hard, learning from her colleagues, and building a strong connection between family literacy programs and adult education." One challenge she plans to address, besides inadequate funding for adult education, is implementing the latest scientifically-based research practices in the classroom.

## STAR Project Tabs State/LAUSD

The U.S. Department of Education Adult Education Office selected California as one of six states to participate in the STAR Project, a program to improve student achievement in reading. The goal of STAR is to improve reading instruction for intermediate level Adult Basic Education learners using research-based instructional strategies, assessment, and curriculum. The project will result in the devel-

*(Continued on page 2)*



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### Programs of Excellence...

## Hacienda La Puente Parent Ed.

"I think the best part of the program is meeting the students after they leave the jail. On one occasion, after a year, I went to court with a former inmate and proudly watched as she was given full custody of her two-year-old child." This is the fond memory of one teacher in **Hacienda La Puente's** (HCLP) Parent Education program — named last school year as a "Program of Excellence" among California adult schools.

The school was commended for the depth of its commitment to parents. One segment of its parent education program is available to the community at large and offers classes for pregnant and parent minors, parent participation classes plus school-site parenting which integrates the program with English as a Second Language classes.

Parent Ed. at HCLP also has built strong links to K-12 schools and works hand-in-hand with principals of neighborhood schools to tailor half-day conferences/seminars that cover a variety of issues vital to parents. The conferences, known as Family Festivals, address topics selected based on needs assessments and parent sur-

opment of a STAR Toolkit.

Los Angeles USD's Adult Education unit will partner with the Department of Education and other local sites to field test the effectiveness of the toolkit in improving student learning. Following the test, CDE will develop a professional development plan to share effective materials, assessments, and instruction.

Contact: **Vicki Prater**, CDE Consultant, 916-324-4935.

## Study: LA Workers 53% illiterate

According to a survey by the Greater Los Angeles United Way, 53% of the working-age residents of Los Angeles County have low literacy levels, as well as poor math and comprehension skills. The study claims four million adults in L.A. County cannot understand a bus schedule, read a street map, understand simple forms, or comprehend basic issues of government. The study also claims:

❑ A sobering 84% of South Los Angeles residents age 16 and over have limited reading, writing, and computation skills.

❑ Only one in every 10 workers deemed functionally illiterate is enrolled in literacy classes and half of them drop out within three weeks. The report found that no school in the county offered Saturday classes or classes tailored for adult

veys. From a variety of workshops, attending parents can choose two or three that relate to the specific needs of their children.

Another part of the program is offered through the Los Angeles Court jails. Students there participate in parent education classes, as well as drug programs and domestic violence programs with parenting components. HCLP's TALK (Teaching and Loving Kids) program allows inmates enrolled in parenting classes to have a weekly hands-on visit with their children ages 12 and under. TALK has been replicated in several counties in California and other states.

The correctional element has developed curricula to support and enhance innovative jail programs and uses teaching materials that are research-based and data-driven, including children's literature.

One of most moving success stories comes from Heide, a foster child who was forced to face the realization that her own mother was not interested in her life. Heidi constructed her own positive model of motherhood through the parenting program, and now she and her daughter are thriving. Heidi is on her own and in college studying to be an English teacher.

For more information, contact **Doris Meyer**, 626-934-5720, Hacienda La Puente Adult Education.

students with families or multiple jobs.

❑ Though nearly 90% of adults take literacy classes to improve their employment opportunities, only 30 percent of literacy programs offer instruction at the workplace. (Sources: *Los Angeles Times*, *Agape Press*)

## America's Literacy Directory

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) recently announced the launch of its newly-designed America's Literacy Directory (ALD) website where users can quickly find information on reading, writing, math, English as a Second Language, skills assessment, basic technology skills, learning disability contacts, volunteer opportunities, and more.

ALD is a directory of literacy service providers available via the Internet and the National Institute for Literacy's toll-free number. It connects employers, learners, volunteers, social service agencies, and others to current literacy information. Info: [www.nifl.gov/nifl/ald\\_update.html](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/ald_update.html)

## Familiar Look to New Program

In Pennsylvania's Allegheny County, at-risk junior high and high school kids have access to a program that looks a lot like adult education.

Two years ago, the state approved Phase 4 Learning Center, a nonprofit corporation that



operates as a private provider for alternative education. The program is "geared to students' academic, social, behavioral and future needs." Considered at-risk are students in danger of not making it to graduation. The reasons are no different in Pennsylvania than in California: pregnancy, health issues, family issues, difficulty with peers and chronic attendance issues.

Programs include high school diploma, dropout retrieval and adult education/literacy center. The 3-1/2 hour-school day offers one-on-one instructional support, mentoring and counseling with a 10-to-1 student/teacher ratio.

Those who run the Phase 4 say students feel accepted and in control of their own destiny. The curriculum, called the A+ Learning System, is aligned with state standards and lets the students work at their own pace. Although coursework is computer-based, it is not a "cyber-school" says its director.

The system gives students more than one chance to succeed. "It's not a big deal if they don't pass the first time — they can do it again," says an instructor. "It's another clean slate."

Phase 4 students learn in anything but a traditional classroom setting. It looks more like a corporate office with glass-block walls and blue-neon lighting. They find a relaxed environment where they are welcome to listen to music on headphones or get up and pour themselves a cup of decaffeinated coffee.

Currently the program serves students from about 10 school districts and works in partnership with local community colleges

In its two years of existence some 200 students have been educated by Phase 4. Last year all seniors graduated and of the 31 who did, 60% went on to higher education, 30% went on to employment and 10% went into the military.

## Adult School News & Notes

• **Drop-In Day & Adult Ed Week Dates:** The CSCAE Board of Directors has designated Thursday, January 20, as Drop-In Day, and the week of March 7-11 as Adult Education Week. Event themes and the availability of supporting materials will be announced later.

• **Lower Diploma Requirements:** Trustees of **San Bernardino City USD** have voted to require 30 fewer credit hours for adult school students to earn a high school diploma. Total credits for graduation will now be 180 instead of 210. The cut includes 25 elective credits and five geography credits. Adult School Principal **Jim Dawson** said "We are not trying to dumb down the curriculum, it's just that we're trying to give these students more opportunity to get through in a timely fashion." He noted that students will still have to earn 20 elective credits and pass the California High School exit exam starting with the class of

2006. Graduation requirements at other schools in the region include **Riverside Adult School**, 175; **Fontana** and **Pomona**, 180; and **Corona** and **Redlands**, 200. (*San Bernardino Press Enterprise*)

### • Raising Attendance in Tough Times:

Attendance at **Ceres Adult School** has risen from 228 students in 2001/02 to 816 for the 2003/04 school year. Among the reasons cited for the increase is the addition of GED preparation courses, more fee-based "community education" courses and a \$75,000 grant to teach English to non-native speakers. Under terms of the grant, when a student demonstrates progress the adult school receives an additional \$225. (*Modesto Bee*)

• **Bond Measure Includes Adult Ed:** A portion of funds from a \$70 million bond measure placed on the November ballot by **Sequoia UHSD** (Redwood City) would fund a new **Sequoia Adult School** facility. (*San Mateo Times*)

• **Launching Workplace ESL:** Thanks to a \$2,000 grant from the Sonoma Valley Education Foundation, **Sonoma Adult School** is adding workplace-based ESL classes to its offerings. ESL teacher **Loretta Carr** is using the money to assess the needs of local employers. About 200 surveys have been sent to businesses in the area. The school plans to establish classes mainly at work sites and customize instruction to fit the specific needs of the businesses.

"I know that vocational ESL is really the way to go with the adult population," said Ms. Carr. "They're not a captive audience like children. You don't have them Monday to Friday for years. You have this small window of opportunity to give them the skills they need. ... If they can have the language skills to get a job, get a better job, advance in their job - that's the way to go." (*Sonoma Index-Tribune*)

• **Phony Diplomas Part II:** According to court records and press reports, **California Alternative High School** (CAHS), which is accused of selling bogus high school diplomas to immigrants, paid churches to recruit students and provide classroom space. The churches involved received an average of \$125 per graduate and were able to keep income from the sale of school materials. After only 30 hours of classes, students were given a diploma CAHS officials promised would provide access to accredited colleges and universities and financial aid programs.

Press reports say court records show the school used untrained teachers who taught that there are 53 states in the union, four branches of government, and two houses of Congress, one for Democrats and one for Republicans.

One student says she paid \$575 in tuition plus \$50 to her church for a class workbook, \$80 to rent a cap and gown, and \$255 for graduation photos. The student, who turned down a \$25 graduation



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meal as well as offers to purchase graduation rings, says she never paid a \$150 make-up fee for missed classes.

The *LA Times* says the school's director, **Daniel Gossai**, who now uses a Burger King as his office, claims to hold a master's degree and two doctorates. But according to court documents, one unaccredited college in L.A. says Gossai was never a student. The *Times* also noted that private high schools are virtually unregulated by state or federal law. (*Los Angeles Times et al*)

- **New Language Course Ok'd:** Adult schools can now offer Foreign Language for the Workplace and receive ADA. The course (#06.000.003) was added pursuant to requests from agencies and community members to be able to communicate in foreign languages with customers and emergency response personnel. Three sample course outlines are posted at: [www.otan.us/courseoutlines/index.cfm?fuseaction=view&catid=1001](http://www.otan.us/courseoutlines/index.cfm?fuseaction=view&catid=1001)

### Did you know?...

- Officials at California's 109 community colleges say some 175,000 students could not enroll in classes last academic year.

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- California forecasts community-college enrollments increasing by as much as 50 percent over the next decade.

- In the last several years, nearly 20 community colleges in the U.S. have hired Washington lobbyists.

- Federal grants to community colleges have gone up nearly tenfold in the last several years.

(Source: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*)

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