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**National Institute  
for Literacy**

# Fax

**To:** Bethany Little

**From:** Alice Johnson

**Fax:** 628-3944

**Phone:** 202-233-2034

**Pages:**

**Email:** ajohnson@nifl.gov

**Re:**

**CC:**

**•Comments:**

# URGENT!

Something designed to address this  
problem would appeal to the pro-Bradley  
crowd.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Ceci Rouse  
Fr: Alice Johnson  
Da: December 10, 1998  
Re: **Welfare Changes in 1999 That Will Strain the Literacy System**

**Summary:**

Time limits under welfare reform have created a whole new group of customers for literacy services. The literacy field is already feeling the impact of this need, and the pressure will intensify in 1999 as a result of provisions in the law that take effect at that time. The adult education and literacy system does not have the capacity to meet the coming demand, and needs a substantial increase in resources in order to do so.

**Issue:**

Beginning in 1999, the welfare law allows all states to count participation in education activities toward the work requirement for more recipients. **This is likely to lead to a substantial increase in adult education enrollments. The adult education and literacy system does not have the capacity to meet this need.** Specifically, the law states that, starting in 1999, the hours of work beyond the initial 20 may also be satisfied by the following activities:

- Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a GED preparation course
- Education directly related to employment (for recipients without a high school diploma or GED)
- Job skills training directly related to employment

For example, in 1999, 35 percent of the welfare caseload in each state must be working at least 25 hours per week, and time spent in adult education and literacy activities beyond the initial 20 hours of work per week will count as work for the entire caseload. This means that in 1999 welfare recipients can receive up to five hours per week of adult education and literacy instruction *under their work requirement*.

A second problem is that many of the jobs found by recipients are in low-paying positions that have limited potential for advancement. In order to move ahead and provide for their families, many adults need literacy and basic skills services even after leaving welfare. Recipients with stronger educational backgrounds have often been the first to acquire jobs and move off the welfare rolls. Long-term welfare recipients are

more likely to need to improve their basic skills in order to find a job and become self-sufficient. For example, in Wisconsin, where the welfare caseload has fallen more than in most other states, 83 percent of current recipients do not have a high school diploma.

In 2000-2002, demand for adult education services may increase further, because a growing percentage of the caseload is required to work 30 hours per week and 10 of those hours may be education and training, including literacy.

Without substantial additional resources, there is no way the adult education and literacy system will be able to meet this need.

For additional information, see the attachment or give me a call at 202-632-1516.



## NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

DATE: October 30, 1998  
TO: Cecelia Rouse, NEC, the White House  
FROM: Carolyn Staley, Andrew Hartman, Alice Johnson

### **ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION: Policy Ideas and Recommendations for the President's Adult Literacy Education Initiative**

#### **1. Learning Disabilities Initiative: LEARN AMERICA**

Free National Learning Disabilities Screening and Assessment of every adult and family member by 2002.

This initiative will:

- Be planned and implemented through a broad partnership led by public agencies such as the National Institute for Literacy, DoEd/OVAE, Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, the Department of Labor's welfare reform initiative, Head Start and Even Start, with private sector involvement and assistance in conducting screening from such groups as the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, the International Dyslexia Association, National Center on Learning Disabilities, Learning Disabilities Assoc., American Medical Association, American Pediatric Association, Public Health Association, national association of clinical psychologists, and other federal agencies including HHS/NIH;
- Be conducted concurrently with a major new research study which will focus on how adults learn and result in recommendations for practice and teaching about how teachers can successfully provide instruction for adults, especially those with learning disabilities;
- Include a major national awareness campaign to inform the public of the impact of learning disabilities such as dyslexia, how to recognize and approach remediation without bias and fear, how learning disabilities do not impact intelligence, and how LD can be successfully accommodated. This will ideally result in increased participation in the screening.

#### **Background:**

The assessment tools already exist or are being developed for screening and recommendation of accommodations for adults with learning disabilities. Money/support for accommodation screening and methods of instruction is often cost prohibitive for adults with LD. Research is finding that significant numbers of people who are still on welfare roles have learning disabilities, which impedes their ability to transition to successful employment.

Major new funding initiative to bring funding for adult education and literacy up to \$750 million in FY2000 and to increase support for adult literacy education to \$1.5 billion by 2005. (Current funding is \$365 million.) The new funds would be available to states through the current adult education funding mechanisms, with eligibility based solely on heightened standards of program improvement, outcomes and accountability.

Elements of the initiative would include:

- Requirement that at least half of the new funding must be used to improve quality of services rather than expanding current services. Improvements could include: hiring teachers with training in this area of instruction, offering more intensified services, providing support services, integrating technology into instruction, and developing standards and curriculum assessments to meet those standards.

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- Adult literacy education programs must demonstrate that all teachers have completed professional certification and training in adult education, learning disabilities, and related adult education course preparation.
- Adult literacy education programs must show a dramatic increase in hiring full-time professional teaching staff, and fewer than one-fourth part-time teachers
- Adult education professional certification programs in university departments will base training on the results of new research on how adults learn and learning disabilities
- Encourage trials of new locations, new local partnerships in more highly visible locations, easier to find, on regular transportation routes; new sites such as satellite programs on higher ed campuses/ community colleges; workplaces, etc.
- Incentives to come to adult programs before or after jobs, in mall storefronts, with public health clinics, other nontraditional locations.

Two research projects would be funded:

2. The first initiative would provide \$15 million a year for a major research project that would bring together the best research and development minds from the National Institute for Health and major universities to carry out a coordinated program of research on how adults best learn to read, write and do math, and to develop effective models of instruction based on this research. This initiative would be modeled on the successful work of NIH in the area of children's reading (from rigorous research to classroom implementation). It would have a special focus on adults with LD.
3. Another \$10-15 million would be made available for a major ESL research and development project. The research would improve ESL knowledge and training. Currently over half of every new adult education dollar goes to ESL services. We know, however, that we have limited knowledge about what makes for effective teaching, and the necessary teaching materials to carry it out.

**Outcomes of the research and program funding program would include:**

- increased basic skills for every adult in reading, writing, and math;
- increased adult enrollment, and improved attendance and achievement of high school credential or other education/training certification;
- improved relationships between K-12 and adult education programs for coordination of student assessment and instruction plans, and for completion of a secondary education, as well as counseling about higher education options.
- a 50% drop in the number of adults lacking a secondary credential by the census 2010.
- implementation and expansion of family literacy learning centers in communities, through partnership with local public school districts, Head Start, Even Start, and Adult Literacy Education providers.

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**Rationale:** Adult literacy education is a stepchild in the American education system, yet half of the adult population scored at the two lowest levels of literacy in 1992 on the National Adult Literacy Survey. Further, three-quarters of America's workers for the year 2006 are currently in the workplace. Americans need access to adult literacy programs, and they need high quality instruction. Transportation, childcare, time issues are major impediments to accessing adult literacy services. Adult Ed programs often off the main path in communities, difficult to find. Lack of common program names or common marketing and product identification in phone directories, community service organization listings makes adult literacy programs hard to find in some cases.

**Packaging:**

In terms of packaging the adult literacy education initiative, it could be announced as **AMERICA FIRST! Every American Equipped for the Future.** America will rank first in the world in literacy among adults by 2010 (or next International Adult Literacy Survey). Secondly, the initiative could be aimed at strengthening American families and their request for skills to make them stronger in their roles as family members, workers, and in civic participation.

America currently ranks 6th in the world in prose literacy skills, 9<sup>th</sup> in document literacy skills, and 9<sup>th</sup> in quantitative literacy skills International Adult Literacy Survey (1994-1995). America lags behind industrialized and developed countries including Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Canada and Australia, and just ahead of the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Ireland, Poland. This is an unacceptable ranking.

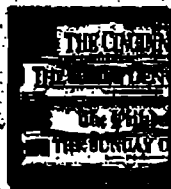
If America is to be an international leader in education rights and access, and compete globally in the international marketplace, America must be first in literacy, and every adult American must have the skills needed to be successful in their roles as a family member, in the workplace, and in civic participation.

# Literate—but Functional?

Literacy in developed nations is usually listed as 95 to 100 percent. But a recent U.N. survey has found that many

people in developed countries never acquire the skills necessary to be successful in a knowledge-driven society.

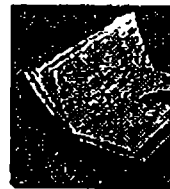
The first International Adult Literacy Survey measured four levels of reading competency in three areas:



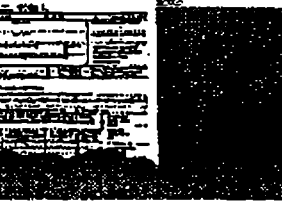
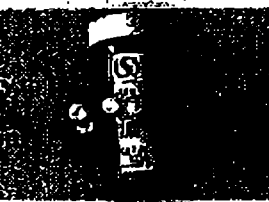
■ **PROSE LITERACY**, the skills needed to understand and use information from printed texts, including editorials, news stories, poems and fiction.



■ **DOCUMENT LITERACY**, the skills required to locate and use information such as job applications, payroll forms and transportation schedules.

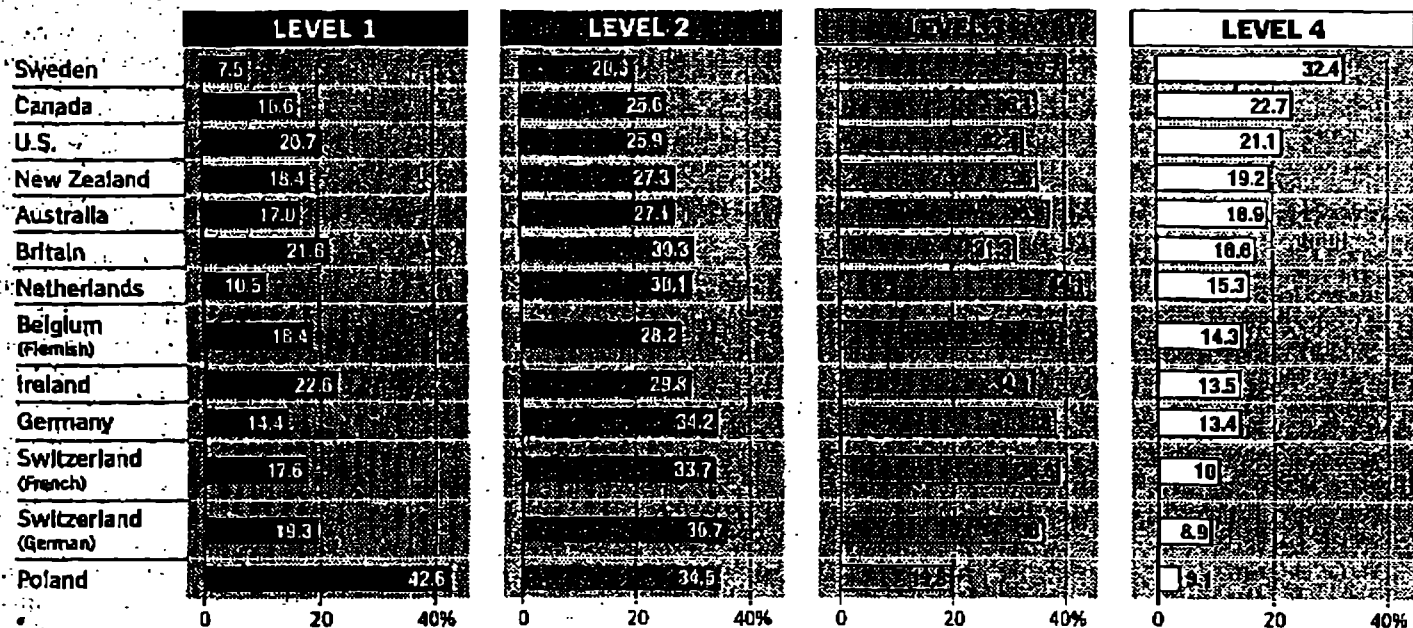


■ **QUANTITATIVE LITERACY**, the skills required to apply arithmetic operations to numbers in printed materials, such as balancing a checkbook and calculating a tip.



Level 4: High competency; individuals can use complex thinking and information-processing skills.

Percent of population reading at each level



NOTE: Figures are rounded.

SOURCES: U.N. Human Development Report 1998, OECD, Statistics Canada

BY DITA SMITH AND ROBERT CORRELL—THE WASHINGTON POST

ON

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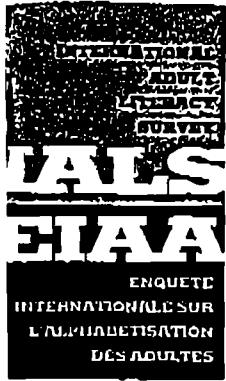


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## Highlights from the Second Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey: *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society*

### *Introduction*

While most people can read, the real question is whether their reading and writing skills meet the challenge of living and working in today's information-rich and knowledge intensive society and economy. This latest report on the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society* tells us that literacy means more than knowing how to read, write or calculate. It involves understanding and being able to use the information required to function effectively in the knowledge-based societies that will dominate the twenty-first century.

The purpose of formal schooling has always been to ensure that new generations develop the skills they require. Yet, the challenge of maintaining and improving the literacy skills of adults is an issue that is much broader than formal education. The International Adult Literacy Survey reveals that literacy skills can be lost if they are not used throughout life. Consequently the study argues for the development of a culture committed to learning and to the creation of literacy-rich environments wherever people live and work, that is, in the home, in the community and in places of employment. It suggests that an investment in literacy is a long-term interest-bearing bond which pays substantial benefits for individuals, for employers and for nations.

The search for solutions to this adult literacy challenge requires a commitment to concerted action. Governments can formulate strategies for improvement but delivering those strategies to create a literate society requires partnerships between schools, employers, workers, governments and communities. It also requires a change in behaviour by individuals. Furthermore, raising the level of a nation's literacy competence demands more than just policies focused on literacy as a single issue. *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society* concludes that it is also important that the goal of increased literacy skill be supported across a broad range of other policy areas such as those related to youth, seniors, employment, human resource development, health, social welfare and crime prevention.

## Highlights

*Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society* is a comparative study of literacy skills in twelve countries, Australia, Belgium (Flanders), Canada, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland (French- and German-speaking), the United Kingdom and the United States. It is published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in cooperation with Statistics Canada and the National Literacy Secretariat and the Applied Research Branch, both of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), and contains important insights into issues related to literacy. One should not take the report, however, as the last word on literacy, but as a contribution to an evolving body of work.

## Defining and measuring literacy

The term "literacy" refers to a particular skill, namely the ability to understand and use printed information in day-to-day activities, at home, at work and in the community.

People face a variety of written information every day that requires them to perform different tasks. In order to measure the proficiency levels in the processing of information, IALS examined three literacy domains: prose, document and quantitative.

**Prose literacy:** the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, poems and fiction.

**Document literacy:** the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and graphics; and

**Quantitative literacy:** the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, to numbers embedded in printed materials, such as balancing a chequebook, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement.

The literacy tasks developed for IALS were scaled by difficulty ranging from zero to 500 points. The range was then divided into five broad literacy levels.

Level 1 indicates very low literacy skills, where the individual may, for example, have difficulty identifying the correct amount of medicine to give to a child from the information found on the package.

Level 2 respondents can deal only with material that is simple, clearly laid out and in which the tasks involved are not too complex. This is a significant category, because it identifies people who may have adapted their lower literacy skills to everyday life, but would have difficulty learning new job skills requiring a higher level of literacy.

Level 3 is considered as the minimum desirable threshold in many countries but some occupations require higher skills.

Levels 4 and 5 show increasingly higher literacy skills requiring the ability to integrate several sources of information or solve more complex problems. It appears to be a necessary requirement for some jobs.

## Distributions of adult literacy skills by country

Important differences in the population distribution of literacy skills exist, both within and among countries. However, an attempt to rank countries using the IALS results is not possible (or desirable) as the relationships are complex, varying from scale to scale and yielding different comparisons from level to level.

## Highlights

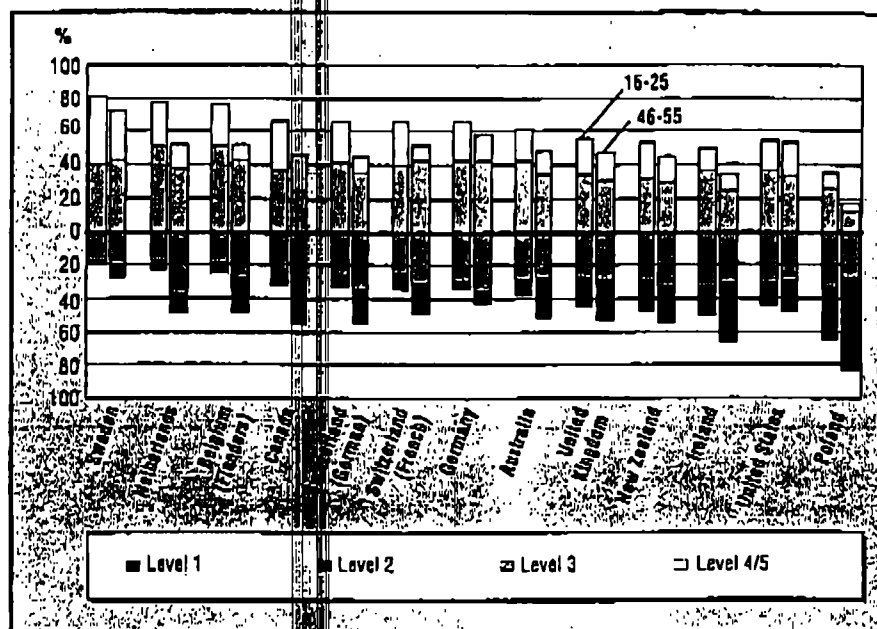
In all countries the literacy skills of the younger age group are higher than those of the older group. In some, Belgium (Flanders) and the Netherlands, for example, the difference in skill is large.

The left bar of each pair represents the proportion of adults aged 16-25 at each document literacy level and the right bar the proportion of those aged 46-55 at each proficiency level. The reference line lies between level 2 and level 3.

FIGURE 1.6

### Literacy proficiency and age

Proportion of persons aged 16-25 and 46-55 who are at each document literacy level, 1994-1995



Countries are ranked by the proportion of the population aged 16-25 who are at levels 3 and 4/5.

Source: International Adult Literacy Survey, 1994-1995.

Low literacy skills are found in a significant proportion of the general adult population in all the countries surveyed. At least 25% of the adults in these countries fail to reach the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the five IALS levels of literacy proficiency. Level 3 is regarded by many experts as a minimum for coping with the complex demands of everyday life and work in OECD countries.

## The benefits of literacy

Literacy has long been valued in its own right and for the access it provides to other benefits such as employment, high income and the capacity to participate fully in society. What has often not been recognized is the full range of benefits to be derived from a literate population, for both the economy and for society.

## Productivity and earnings

OECD countries receive measurable and substantial positive economic returns as a result of strong literacy skills. Data clearly show that the percentage of people with relatively high incomes grows with increasing levels of literacy proficiency. The impact of people's levels of literacy skill on their wages is greatest the more open and flexible the economy, such as Canada and the United States. The wage penalty associated with low performance is large across all countries.

## Highlights

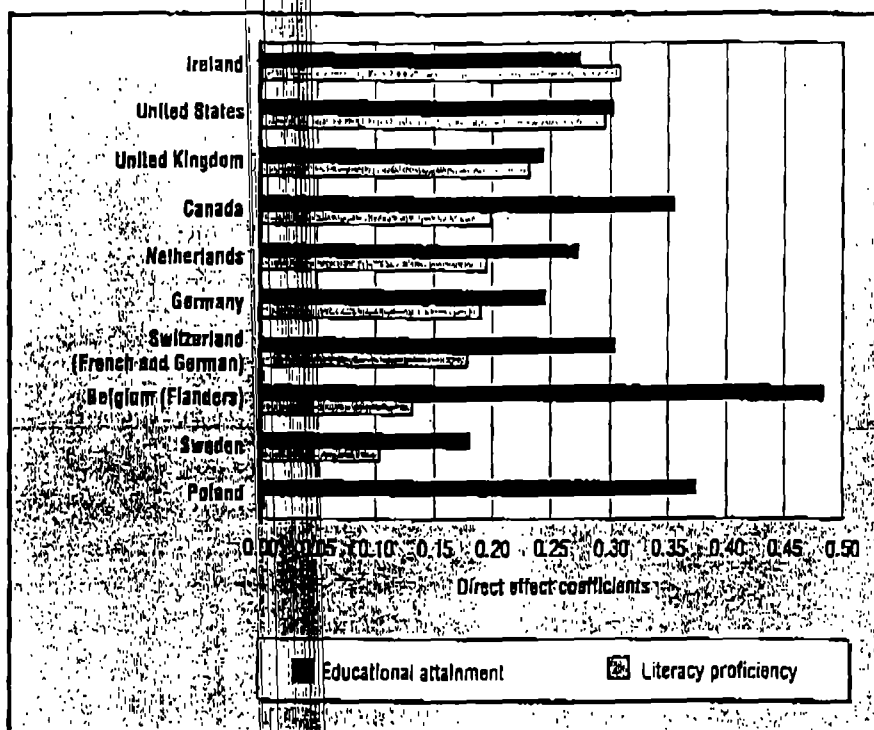
Educational attainment has a large effect on income in all countries studied. The effect is largest in Belgium (Flanders), Canada and Poland and weakest in Sweden, which has a compressed wage structure. Literacy produces a wage effect that comes on top of that of education. The literacy wage premium is largest in Ireland and the United States; there are similar wage effects in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The effect of literacy on income is net of the combined influences of gender, parental education, respondents' education and experience in the labour market.

FIGURE 2.5

Net direct effects of education and literacy on income

Regression coefficients showing the strength of the direct effect of education on income and of literacy on income net of the effects of background variables, 1994-1995



Countries are ranked by the net direct effect of literacy on income. See notes to Table 2.5.

Source: International Adult Literacy Survey, 1994-1995.

While educational attainment is an important determinant for income, IALS demonstrates that literacy proficiency has an independent and substantial effect on income in all countries. Further, the impact of a person's literacy on his or her income is in addition to, and on top of, the effect of educational attainment on earnings. The only exception is Poland, where the influence of literacy skill is still negligible compared with the overwhelming impact of educational credentials.

Higher income generated through improved literacy skills and greater productivity will contribute to higher government revenues. Even a relatively small increase in national productivity through improved literacy will have a relatively large impact on public revenues. For example, a 2 percent increase in wages and earnings from improvements in national literacy would provide approximately a 1.8 percent increase in revenue in a country that is dependent primarily on value-added tax.

## Labour force participation and unemployment

Employment and unemployment are strongly related to levels of literacy proficiency. Persons who are more literate are likely to have better jobs, have higher levels of productivity and earnings, and are less vulnerable to long-term unemployment. Higher levels of literacy allow for efficient learning and thus allow workers to adapt easily to new technologies and changing job requirements.

## Highlights

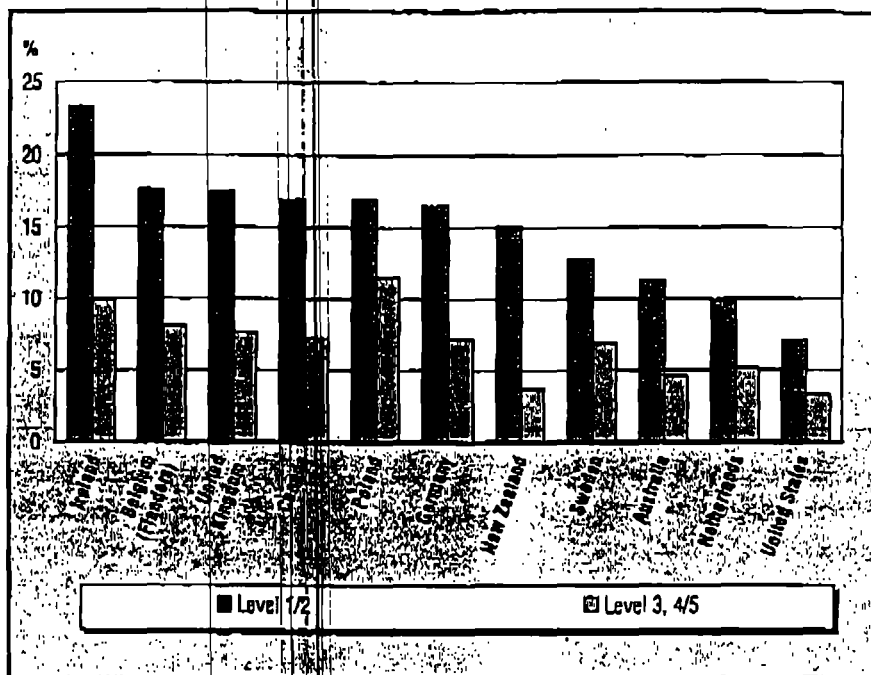
Employment and unemployment are strongly related to literacy proficiency: low-skilled adults have a greater chance of being unemployed than high-skilled adults.

Figure 2.8 shows the proportion of the labour force actively seeking paid work during the year preceding the interview.

FIGURE 2.8

### Unemployment and literacy

Unemployment incidence (rate) by level of literacy proficiency for the labour force aged 16-65, document scale, 1994-1995



Countries are ranked by the incidence of unemployment of those with level 1 and 2 skills.

Source: International Adult Literacy Survey, 1994-1995.

Low skilled adults have a greater chance of being unemployed than those possessing higher literacy skills, and the duration of unemployment for those with low skills may also be greater. Those with low literacy skills are clearly at a serious disadvantage with respect to access to the labour market. This holds true in all the countries studied despite the differences in economic structures and the distribution of literacy skill.

### Rewarding credentials versus skills

Educational attainment is critical at the job-entry level as employers in most countries use educational credentials as a screening device for initial hiring. Once past this critical juncture, however, the IALS data reveal interesting differences in the way different labour markets reward literacy skills. As measured by wage premiums, the independent economic returns to literacy are largest in the most open economies. In the United Kingdom and the United States, for example, the net return (or benefit) to skill is large and of the same order as the return to formal educational qualifications. In the Netherlands and Sweden, in contrast, the rewards to both education and literacy skill are comparable to the effect of labour market experience. This rather paradoxical effect may be related to the fact that literacy skill is higher on average and more uniformly distributed in these populations so that differences in skill are smaller and more difficult for employers to detect, evaluate and reward.

## Highlights

The early years of language acquisition provide a critical foundation for children's school experience and, eventually, their life chances and well-being. However, not all children develop at the same rate. Inequalities in the literacy proficiencies of youth in some countries are apparent as early as age four or five. The differences are largely attributable to the effects of socialisation within the family and within the community through schooling and other activities.

Societies that are rich in human capital (or assets), as gauged by the literacy level of their youth, achieve this wealth by enabling the children from less advantaged educational backgrounds to achieve relatively high levels of literacy.

Countries with high average literacy scores appear to have a more equitable distribution of literacy for youth of differing parental education or socio-economic levels. In countries with little socio-economic division, such as Sweden, youth with parents possessing limited formal education face only a small disadvantage, equivalent to the growth in literacy associated with roughly four years of education. In contrast, in countries with the greatest socio-economic inequalities, for example the United States, the performance gap between youth with the least and the most parental education is the equivalent of the literacy gain associated with an astounding 15 years of additional education. While described in educational terms, it must be remembered that these differences reflect more than educational processes - they are also the product of a range of social and economic forces which transform literacy in adulthood.

On average, the literacy skills of youth in some countries who completed their formal education in recent years are comparable to, or even higher than, the skills of adults who completed their schooling in the 1970's or 1980's. This said, when holding constant the socio-economic status of the parents, the range of literacy proficiency observed between and amongst the youth cohort of the countries studied differs, sometimes considerably, from country to country. For example, the proficiency of youth in Germany, whose parents achieved grade 12, is equivalent to the growth in literacy normally associated with roughly three additional years of schooling in the United States, for children whose parents had similar educational backgrounds. The literacy performance of Canadian and German youth, in this same socio-economic grouping, however, lags behind their Swedish peers by approximately the same amount.

*Literacy, Economy and Society*, the first report of IALS (1995), argued that literacy is not synonymous with educational attainment. This finding is mirrored in *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society*. For each country studied, levels of educational achievement alone cannot be considered a reliable measure of the literacy skills of a population. IALS has confirmed that a large number of adults are able to reach high levels of literacy without high levels of education. This suggests that while formal education is the most common route to skill, it is not impossible to acquire literacy skills through other means.

## Adults' readiness to learn

In the majority of countries surveyed, around 40% of the population participates in adult education and training. In each country, however, there are still large groups that are not involved. Even so, adult training is on the rise influenced, in part, by the job market which has recognized the increased importance of adult education and training as an investment. In all countries, roughly half of the participants in adult education and training attend an employer-supported activity. The data shows, however, that adult education and training programmes are less likely to involve those with low literacy skills, the very people who need them the most. Given that literacy is a prerequisite for an adult's readiness to engage in learning, the lack of strong literacy skills can be a critical factor that deters these adults from participating in training. The rates of participation in adult education and training increase gradually with increasing levels of literacy skill.

## Highlights

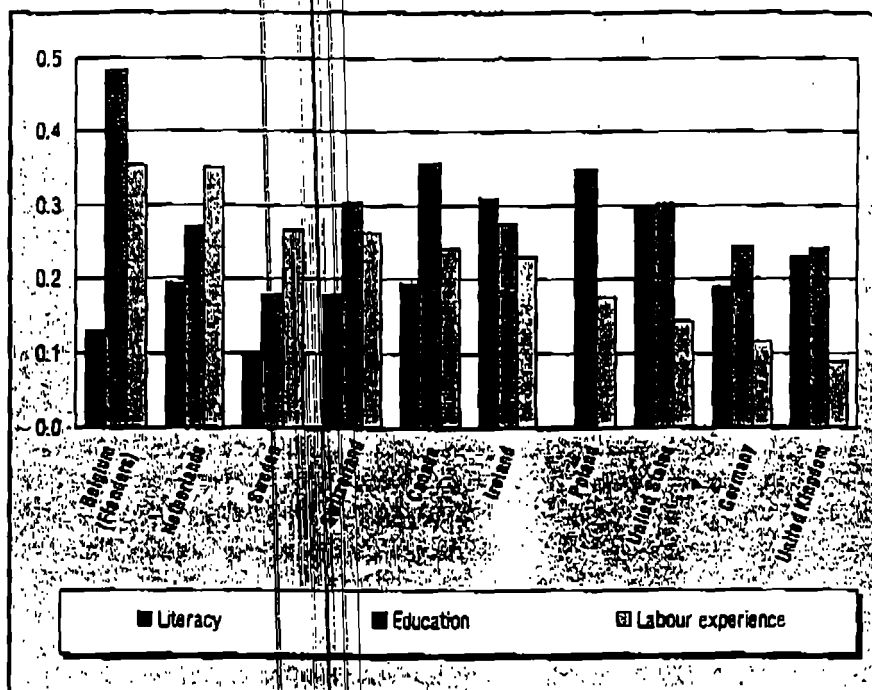
Some countries reward labour market experience and to an extent years of education; others place relatively more value on skill.

The figure shows the magnitude of the standardised effects on income of labour market experience and education, and labour market experience and literacy skills.

FIGURE 2.10

Experience and income controlling for education and literacy skills

Regression coefficients indicating the size of the effect of labour market experience on income, relative to the effects of educational attainment and literacy proficiency, 1994-1995



Countries are ranked in descending order of the net direct effect of labour market experience on income.

Source: International Adult Literacy Survey, 1994-1995.

It can be presumed that labour markets which reward experience and skill more than they pay for qualifications are more efficient —better able to match individuals with the range of jobs available. For example, the United States labour market pays a premium for literacy skill, and that country's performance on indices such as employment, mobility and turnover rates, job creation and worker productivity stands out among the OECD countries.

## Wider social benefits

Low levels of literacy can be equated with lower wages and more frequent spells of unemployment, thus contributing to poverty. In fact, the IALS report indicates that a high percentage of people on public assistance and those in prisons have lower than average basic skills.

Literacy is also related to health. Persons with higher skill may maintain better health through their ability to understand and interpret health information. They may also be better able to exercise preventive health practices and detect problems so that they can be treated earlier, or make appropriate choices amongst health care options.

## Literacy acquisition

The IALS study argues that raising a country's overall level of literacy requires an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach to policy-making. Among factors determining literacy skills in all countries studied are a person's socio-economic background and educational attainment.



## NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

January 14, 1998

President Bill Clinton  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am very pleased to be able to place this copy of our soon-to-be-published report, *"The State of Literacy in America"* in your hands. This is the only copy that exists, and it was created especially so that I might give it to you ahead of schedule.

This report is a part of the national literacy public awareness campaign that I have been directing for the past two years. The focus of the current campaign message is the importance of literacy to good policy, and we have prepared materials for use by literacy advocates in making the case for strengthened literacy support among policymakers.

I believe you will be interested and concerned as you read the very brief introduction (which is written in lay terms) and peruse the national map and chart of state literacy rates for adults at the lowest level of literacy skills. I also believe that, while I have noted below several action steps for your consideration as you move toward the State of the Union, you will draw some conclusions of your own as to how the low literacy levels of Americans age 16 and older impact other policy areas important to your Administration. This is my hope.

It is clear that you believe literacy skills are essential for all Americans. I saw your commitment first-hand when I was Executive Director of the Arkansas Governor's Commission on Adult Literacy. Now, with Welfare-to-Work, your Commission's dialogue on race, America Reads, Hope Scholarships, and the technology education and training program you announced only days ago, to name only a few, I think you will agree that the success of each of your initiatives rests in no small measure on the literacy skills of those you seek to help.

### Possible policy outcomes as a result of the report

1. **Increase funding for Adult Education and Literacy programs.** Increase the amount of federal funds to state adult education and literacy programs to at least \$500 million--up from the current \$345 million. Your own budget recommendation this year was \$382 million. (Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, US Department of Education.) Both public adult education and volunteer-based literacy programs are eligible for

these funds and need a major infusion of support to meet demands for service. This modest increase would be historic and significant. It would show a real commitment to lifelong learning.

Further, a directive from you to federal agencies for increased collaboration and planning with literacy policy specialists would be a bold signal as to the importance you place on this fundamental need for all agencies to pay attention to how literacy affects the lives of their constituents. Already we work with health insurance-medical professionals and welfare-to-work (HHS), job training (Labor), corrections and parole literacy programs (Justice), public housing (HUD), America Reads (Education), National Skills Standards, and Small Business Administration and a host of other agencies we have made inroads with. But nothing requires them to think and plan with literacy in mind. It would be interesting to consider the possibility of asking agencies to come up with a "literacy impact statement" similar to an environmental impact statement.

**2. Hope Scholarships.** Consider allowing use of the scholarship by adult learners without high school credentials who wish to matriculate at community colleges. Adults could take basic skills courses for credit and continue into higher education track course work and increased employability. Many adult students with literacy needs would be better served by community colleges because of employment schedules and availability of public transportation. Further, the increased self-esteem that results from attending classes on a college campus is a major boost to adult learners and would serve as an orientation to campus and academic life. Some states currently fund public adult education through the community college system.

**3. Welfare-to-Work.** You already have stated that you want your program to build long-term self-sufficiency. If workers do not have basic education/literacy skills, this goal is not likely to prove possible. Welfare-to-Work clients want to get decent jobs and to know that any and all education or training programs or job experience will help them reach this goal. They must build resumes that employers will reward.

Additionally, the large percentage of women on welfare who are also mothers with children on welfare need special encouragement. Most are already working but are stuck in dead-end jobs without hope of climbing the internal job ladder. Only increased education will qualify them for better jobs.

Since education services have been largely written out of the welfare reform legislation, including the new \$3 billion welfare-to-work program, the 50 percent of welfare recipients without a high school degree could benefit from on-the-job educational training. (Welfare recipients read, on average, at the sixth grade level.)

**3. Race and Literacy.** The attached summary pages from the National Adult Literacy Survey of 1993 show the discrepancies in literacy skills among ethnic populations. Any policies designed to provide a level playing field for all must begin with a universal solid grounding in literacy. Your race commission would do well to consider literacy as a critical area for reform

and equal access, no matter what the age of an individual. Further, there need to be special inducements for high-school dropouts to get back on an educational track as soon as possible.

4. **Learning Disabilities (LD).** Since one significant cause of literacy problems is considered to be LD, you might want to suggest the possibility of early LD screening for all children. The latest research on reading disabilities has shown that early intervention with appropriate instruction is the best hope for many children who are now falling further and further behind -- and who almost certainly make up a significant proportion of youth and adults with low literacy.

Additional ideas for a policy announcement include:

- Appointing a "blue ribbon" panel, possibly chaired by Paul Simon, to report back to you by International Literacy Day, September 8, 1998 with a set of recommendations for what the nation must do to give Americans with low levels of literacy and education a chance to find opportunity in the economy and society of today and the future. Our Board is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. With Paul Simon's confirmation in July, the Board consists of all Clinton nominees, so it could serve as a ready-made panel, or another group could be named.
- Announce a legislative initiative for the next fiscal year. It could be a special section and appropriation to the Adult Education Act that would provide funding for specific populations and areas of need, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) and welfare-to-work. In the case of ESL, the information we have collected about waiting lists exposes a national shame - - several months to several *years* in major urban areas -- and could justify, and generate support for, an effort like this. The recent National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report on dropouts also demonstrates the need of immigrants for alternative education services. You could announce that there will be a follow-up to the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey report that would provide a picture of literacy in the nation by 2002. Preliminary planning for such a survey has been initiated by NCES, but a Presidential announcement could make sure it actually happen.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your commitment to literacy for all. This report, grave as it is, demands that literacy be made a national priority. You always told me to keep you posted and never to let you miss an opportunity for service. Here it is.

Yours sincerely, and with gratitude in advance for what you will do,

Carolyn Staley  
Deputy Director



# NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

August 6, 1998

The Honorable Bill Clinton  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for the invitation to provide you and your Race Initiative staff with recommendations for how literacy can be part of the solution to racial inequity and the social problems that result. Our suggestions follow.

**PROBLEM:** Black and Hispanic welfare recipients have more difficulty leaving the rolls than recipients who are white.

**SOLUTION:** The literacy level of whites averages 54 points higher than that of blacks and 71 points higher than Hispanics (using a 500 point scale). Hispanics generally receive a year and a half less schooling than blacks, and nearly three years less than whites. Policy solutions include:

- **Higher Education Act.** Provide welfare recipients with literacy needs with greater opportunity to improve their skills before (or in conjunction with) entering the workplace. The Senate Higher Education Act amends welfare law by increasing the amount of time recipients can participate in education and training activities while still meeting state work requirements, but the House legislation does not.
- **Your Budget Proposal to Congress.** Increase adult education state grant funding to at least \$500 million, and target funds to urban areas with a high concentration of low literate minorities.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** See attached *New York Times* article, *Fact Sheet: Literacy & Welfare*, and *Adult Literacy Rates of Major U.S. Cities*.

**PROBLEM:** The literacy skills of black high school graduates are significantly lower than those of white high school graduates. Blacks generally need a college degree to reach the same literacy level as white high school graduates.

**SOLUTION:** Appoint an Assistant Secretary of Education for Race Issues to work with the K-12 and postsecondary systems to close the achievement gap. The Assistant Secretary could achieve more equitable outcomes by leading an effort for more equitable inputs. One example is the current school financing system, which will remain unequal as long as local property tax bases set local school funding levels.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** See pages 32-42 of the *National Adult Literacy Survey*.

**PROBLEM:** Blacks who earn a General Educational Development (GED) high school equivalency degree see only marginal economic benefits, while whites who earn the same degree see a substantial increase in their earnings.

**SOLUTION:** Ask the Departments of Commerce and Labor to develop a joint initiative to increase awareness among employers about the value of the GED. Make sure it recognizes that the GED credential represents *more advanced academic achievement* than a high school diploma.

**FOR MORE**

**INFORMATION:** See attached *Focus on Basics* article.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Alice Johnson or us at 202-632-1516.

Again, thank you for all of your leadership in improving both educational opportunity and race relations.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hartman  
Director

Carolyn Staley  
Deputy Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joan Auchter  
Terry Hartle

FROM: Andy Hartman  
Carolyn Staley

DATE: August 12, 1997

RE: International Literacy Day

Thank you for sharing your ideas for a Presidential policy announcement in conjunction with International Literacy Day. We have also been brainstorming ideas that might be fit into such an announcement. It seems like we are generally thinking along similar lines and would like to get together and talk about how we might present a unified package of ideas to the White House staff.

While we like the idea of the President challenging more potential students to renew their education and get a GED or high school diploma, we would like to see the total announcement be a broader one. As you know, for many millions of Americans, getting a GED is still at the end of a long, hard road.

Some of our ideas of what the President could announce in conjunction with International Literacy Day include:

1. Appoint a "blue ribbon" panel, possibly chaired by Paul Simon, to report back to him by Sept. 8, 1998 with a set of recommendations for what the nation must do to give Americans with low levels of literacy and education a chance to find opportunity in the economy and society of today and the future. Since the President nominates and Congress approves our Board, it could serve as the panel or another group could be named.
2. Announce a legislative initiative for the next fiscal year. It could be a special section and appropriation to the Adult Education Act that would provide funding for specific populations and areas of need, such as ESL or welfare to work. In the case of ESL, the waiting list information we have collected is a national shame and could justify an effort like this. The recent National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report on drop outs also demonstrates the need to recapture immigrants into alternative education services. With regards to welfare to work, since education services have been largely written out of the welfare reform legislation, including the new \$3 billion

welfare to work program, the 50% of welfare recipients without a high school degree could benefit from on-the-job educational training.

3. The President would announce that there will be a follow up to the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) report that would provide a picture of literacy in the nation by 2002. Preliminary planning for such a survey has been initiated by NCES, but the President could make sure it actually happens by making such an announcement. Such an announcement could also be used to ascertain the impact of other initiatives such as #5 (below).
4. Modify the original executive order around the College Work Study initiative and broaden the allowable group to be tutored to include parents of young children who have low levels of literacy themselves. This would address a number of issues: it would broaden the number of schools willing to sign up for the effort, since many colleges already support adult and family literacy tutoring programs; and it would recognize the very real role parents play in the literacy development of their children. In addition, you would be tapping into a national training and support system built up around adult and family literacy that simply is not in place for tutoring young children.
5. Have the President challenge each state to improve the number of people being served in literacy programs and those receiving GEDs (or some other indicator) by a specific percentage. Ask the NIFL/ED to create teams in each state to advocate for this and track the progress. Ask for annual report back to him.

We have shared these ideas with Bob Shireman and Mike Cohen and are looking forward to talking with them when they return from vacation. Perhaps we could meet before that time and see if we can propose a unified set of actions that might be packaged for a Presidential announcement.

**Possible Deliverables for the Lifelong Learning Summit  
From Discussion 10/30/98**

**1. Federal Training Technology Initiative Efforts ([www.fed-training.org](http://www.fed-training.org))**

**Background**

The Administration is interested in the ability of new information and communications technologies to enhance life-long learning by expanding access, reducing cost, and improving quality. For example:

Access to education and training could be expanded by allowing adults to learn at a time, place, and pace that is convenient for them - using the Internet, CD-ROM, and/or other technology-mediated forms of instruction.

The quality of education could be improved through the use of technologies such as: (1) modeling and simulation and case-based reasoning, which enable "learning by doing"; (2) intelligent tutoring systems, which can respond to the individual needs of the learner and recognize common mistakes; (3) synchronous and asynchronous learning networks, which can encourage the formation of "communities of learners" between students and teachers; and (4) the appropriate use of multimedia, which can increase retention and "time on task."

Cost for the development of high-quality instructional content/software could be reduced by: greater re-use of instructional modules; better authoring tools; and open specifications for instructional management systems - such as the EduCause Instructional Management System (IMS).

Relevance could be increased by reducing the time that is required to develop instructional software, thereby providing timely technology-based training materials to the learner.

The Administration is pursuing a number of policies to realize this vision, including:

eliminating barriers to broader adoption of distance learning by both individuals and institutions through reforms of the Higher Education Act;  
increasing investment in R&D for learning technologies;  
encouraging experimentation and collaboration in the use of distance learning with a new Department of Education grant program called "Learning Anytime, Anywhere Partnerships"; and  
encouraging federal agencies to make better use of information technology to train their own employees.

**Deliverables:**

**Federal Strategy/Management Plan**

**Federal Niche Site on ALX—One Stop for Finding Federal Training, Opportunities for Collaboration, and Best Practices**

**2. Possible Executive Order on Training Procurement**

We are currently looking at/for new procurement mechanisms, public-private partnerships, and innovative business models that will encourage private sector investment in the development of high-quality instructional software and wider deployment and utilization of technology-mediated instruction throughout

the economy. Our strategy can only work if all businesses and educational institutions with technology and services capable of serving federal training needs are willing and able to compete for federal business. A Department of Labor led effort, with the assistance of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OMB) and the Office of Personnel Management is looking into how existing procedures create barriers to bidding on federal contracts and to intergovernmental and public/private collaborations. An Executive Order in this area would include mechanisms that would encourage collaborations and streamline the process to help federal agencies hold competitions that will attract proposals from creative institutions throughout the economy—even institutions that have had no previous experience in bidding on government contracts.

Deliverable:

Executive Order

**3. Education Research Initiative \_ National Institutes for Learning type program**

**A solid foundation on which next generations of teachers and of learners will grow.**

In FY99, the Department of Education (ED) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) will undertake a Education Research Initiative (ERI) targeted to improve teaching and learning in reading, mathematics and science. This program (currently funding is \$25M at NSF) is the first phase of a planned interagency research strategy derived from the *PCAST Report to the President on the Use of Technology to Strengthen K-12 Education in the United States* (March, 1997).

One of the major findings of the PCAST report was that funding levels for educational research are shockingly low. Education research consists of less than 0.1 percent of elementary and secondary education expenditures while 23 percent of all U.S. expenditures for prescription and non-prescription medications are applied toward pharmaceutical research. The Panel strongly recommended that education research funding be increased to at least 0.5 percent of education expenditures—amounting to about \$1.5 billion dollars. PCAST argued that this funding would have to be provided at the federal level because, given the localization of education, no one state, district, or private firm would likely make this kind of investment in research.

The goal of the ERI is to develop the knowledge base necessary to effectively address two critical preconditions that underlie all student achievement, and whose absence is at the base of many learning problems:

all children will be able to learn and have mastered the basics of reading and mathematics by the end of grade 3;

all mathematics, science, and reading teachers will have the high-level content, cognitive, and pedagogical knowledge and skills required to effectively perform their jobs.

Based on these focus areas, the ERI will seek proposals to perform (PCAST Report, page 91):

Basic research in various learning-related disciplines and fundamental work on various educationally relevant technologies

Early-stage research aimed at developing new forms of educational software, content, and technology-enabled pedagogy,

Empirical studies designed to determine which approaches to the use of technology are in fact most effective.

Although the PCAST priorities relate to technology, we agree with the PCAST on the need to embed technology in educational environments where research and practice takes place. *"In such an environment, attempts to isolate the effects of technology as a distinct independent variable may be both difficult and unproductive. The Panel believes the kinds of findings that might actually prove useful in practice are more likely to arise from research aimed at assessing the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of specific educational approaches and techniques that make use of technology."* (Page 94; footnote 176, page 91).

Deliverables:

Creation of a National Institute for Learning (NIL as end game, ramp up phases); or  
Increased Funding for the ERI  
Announcement of ERI Research Agenda

**4. CompTIA A+ Certification ([www.comptia.org](http://www.comptia.org))**

The Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) is the largest trade association in the IT sector, including member companies from retailers, computer repair shops, distributors, internet service providers, software publishers, computer manufacturers, and semiconductor manufacturers. CompTIA has focused on vocational level IT certifications and training; it is the sponsor of A+ certification, an industry-wide standard for measuring benchmark level, vendor neutral technical skills expected of a technician with six months on-the-job experience. Several industry leaders including, CompUSA, IBM, Packard Bell/NEC, and MicroAge Inc., have made A+ certification a mandatory requirement for all their service technicians.

Currently, CompTIA is working with the Job Corps at the Department of Labor to assist them in creation a base line generic entry level IT skills certification for Job Corps participants. The Job Corps course development and certification IT project consists of corporate, non-profit, government, and education providers to further employment opportunities for Job Corps students and other adult learners in the information technology field. The partner organizations are developing this pilot project to establish basic information technology courses and skills certification that will allow course graduates to obtain entry level jobs, or undertake advanced training, in the information technology industry. A variety of learning technologies and approaches will be explored for use in the basic information technology courses including the U.S. Air Force Labs' Intelligent Tutors, web-based instruction, and CD-ROM tools.

Deliverables:

Job Corps course and expansion plans for pilot project  
Federal government adoption of A+ certification requirement  
Federal government participation in the sponsorship of additional certifications

##### **5. NPR Agency Training Technology Plans**

Last month the Vice President sent a letter to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies requesting a statement of support (vision statement) for the President's Federal Training Technology Initiative. The letter also announced his intention to release an overview of agencies' visions and innovations for using technology to help workers prosper in a growing economy at the Lifelong Learning Summit. Each agency vision statement should be limited to 500 words and suggested topics include: leadership, technology goals for the next 5 years, partnership/collaboration efforts, expected or realized benefits, and (as appropriate) research. NPR (Russ Kile and Joann Whitmann) is taking the lead on collecting and formatting the publication.

##### **Deliverable:**

Compilation of Agency Vision Statements with an introduction by the Vice President addressing the overall Federal strategy to make the Federal government a model user of innovative technologies in training the Federal workforce.



## United States Department of Education

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Office of the Assistant Secretary

### Filling the Human Investment Gaps in Adult Education and Literacy

#### *The Federal Role in Adult Education*

- The Adult Education Act Basic Grants are the major source of Federal support for basic skills programs. The purpose of the program is to provide educational opportunities for adults over the age of 16, not currently enrolled in school, who lack a high school diploma or the basic skills to function effectively in the workplace or in their daily lives. More than 4 million adults in 4,000 adult learning centers participate in adult education annually.
- Basic Grants to States are allocated by a formula based upon the number of adults, over age 16, who have not completed high school in each State. States distribute funds to local providers through a competitive process based upon State-established funding criteria. Eligible providers of basic skills and literacy programs include: local educational agencies, community-based organizations, correctional education agencies, postsecondary educational institutions, public or private nonprofit agencies, institutions that have the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families, and for-profit agencies, institutions or organizations which are part of a consortium, that includes a public or private nonprofit agency, organization or institution.
- Local programs of instruction emphasize the acquisition of basic skills including: reading, writing, computation, communication and problem solving. Courses of instruction include Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English as a Second Language (ESL).
- The federal investment in adult education for FY 99 is \$385 million. Of that, \$365 million will go directly to states to support adult education and literacy services. States are required by law to provide a 25% match for adult education funds. But recent assessments show the federal investment leverages more than three times the required match in State and local funds for adult education and literacy programs (See attached map). The average per learner expenditure is less than \$300 annually. Moreover, using constant 1995 dollar values, spending per participant dropped from \$274 in 1966 to an actual value of \$73 in 1998, despite an increased federal investment.
- Over the last decade, adult education enrollment has increased by nearly one third. English literacy instruction for limited English proficient adults is the fastest growing component of the adult education program. Adult education also is experiencing an influx of out-of-school youth whose goal is secondary education completion.
- Over the last five years 1.7 million adults have earned high school diplomas or GEDs through adult education programs; more than one million adult learners whose first language was not English achieved basic English literacy proficiency in adult education programs. Another one million English speakers achieved basic literacy skills.

### *What are the Needs and Challenges?*

- On the National Adult Literacy Survey, twenty-one to 23 percent -- or some 40 to 44 million of the 191 million adults in this country -- demonstrated skills in the lowest level of prose, document, and quantitative proficiencies (Level 1). Some 25 to 28 percent of the respondents, representing about 50 million adults nationwide, demonstrated skills in the next higher level of proficiency (Level 2) on each of the literacy scales. While their skills were more varied than those of individuals performing in Level 1, their repertoire was still quite limited.
- Adults in prison were far more likely than those in the population as a whole to perform in the lowest two literacy levels. These incarcerated adults tended to be younger, less well educated, and to be from minority backgrounds. Adults in the lowest level on each of the literacy scales (17 to 19 percent) were far more likely than those in the two highest levels (4 percent) to report receiving food stamps. Nearly half (41 to 44 percent) of all adults in the lowest level on each literacy scale were living in poverty, compared with only 4 to 8 percent of those in the two highest proficiency levels.
- 43 percent of adults who could benefit from services but were not participating indicated that they faced the following barriers to enrollment: time, the opportunity costs of participating in the classes (such as sacrificing pay for hours not worked while going to classes), and the actual costs in terms of paying for necessary child care and transportation. It also is difficult for participants to complete programs. Studies show that reasons for not completing programs are usually focused on personal issues--not the quality of programs. Some of these issues include illness of the learner or the learner's family members, changes in benefits required to sustain income, lack of support by spouses, family violence, changes in housing or failure of transportation.
- Current funding levels are not sufficient to meet the demand for services. In particular, large urban areas report a large unmet demand for ESL services. States are being called upon to simultaneously meet the demand for increased adult education services -- stemming in part from welfare reform, immigration, and an influx of out-of-school youth seeking high school completion -- and improve the quality of the services they offer by including contextualized and hands-on learning as well as technology.
- Providing access to adult education programs in a way that overcomes these barriers and improving the quality of adult education instruction would help address major gaps in the system.

### *Investment Options*

- Create *America Learns Technology Challenge grants*. These grants would help state and local education partners work with business and industry to use technology to expand access to-- as well as improve the quality of--adult basic skills instruction. The Department has proposed this \$50 million initiative as part of its FY 2000 budget recommendation. These grants would expand access to adult education by focusing federal investments in data, voice, video and fiber optics technology to link at-risk adults with state-of-the-art basic skills services they can use anywhere/anytime -- in adult classrooms, libraries or the privacy of their homes. A body of research shows that technology provides: opportunities for learners to get immediate feedback privately; more opportunities to engage learners in the instructional process; a wider array of instructional methods and assignments; presentation of complex material in concrete visual contexts than is now possible; increased responsibility for learners; and greater opportunities for individual attention. Clearly the potential to expand access and quality services is there if the investment is made.

*D. D. Brown*

*ESL \$20 million by FY 2000*

2

*1) Local partners  
2) later/1*

Family Literacy - P. reschke +  
Adapted

■ Fund **50,000 Teachers for Adult Basic Skills**. This initiative would improve the quality of adult basic skills instruction by placing 50,000 full-time professional teachers in adult learning centers over a five-year period. The initiative would make funds available to States that volunteer to hire one new adult education teacher for every two teachers funded by the initiative. A hiring priority for the teachers would be placed on individuals demonstrating strong skills in: teaching in contexts such as work, parenting, and citizenship; effectively assessing learning gains; and effectively using technology as an educational tool for adults, including uses of the Internet. Most adult education teachers work part time. Many are elementary and secondary education teachers who do not have formal training in teaching adult learners. Nationally, adult education loses about 30% of its instructors annually, largely to full-time teaching jobs in K-12 systems offering appropriate salaries and benefits. A majority of States do not have a system for certifying adult education teachers. While States have met the required spending targets for professional development required by law, improving the quality and effectiveness of adult basic skills programs must start with the teachers learners depend on for success in achieving their goals.

■ Create **21st Century Workforce Education Initiative** grants to help support partnerships of business, labor and education organizations improve the basic literacy skills of current or newly hired workers to meet the demands of a global economy. Matching funds would be required. Programs would teach basic literacy skills workers need on the job as well as the SCANS skills like thinking, reasoning and problem-solving that will keep them working in the next century. In the United States, jobs requiring the most education and training will be the fastest growing and highest paying between now and 2005. Occupations which require a bachelor's degree or above will average 23 percent growth--almost double the 12 percent growth projected for occupations that require less education and training. Our national adult literacy survey clearly demonstrated that individuals with better literacy skills are more likely to be employed, work more weeks per year, and earn higher wages than individuals with lower proficiencies. Low basic skills levels of employees can limit profits, increase waste, cause accidents and slow down productivity.

Expand funding for the **Adult Education Basic State Grants** program. Under the new Workforce Investment Act, signed by President Clinton on August 7, States will be challenged to improve the quality of adult education programs by focusing local programs on best practices and being held accountable for results on core indicators prescribed in the law. The Department will negotiate with States what their annual target performance levels on these indicators will be. Annually, we will publish and send to Congress a report card indicating how well each State did in achieving its target levels. Putting additional funding into the Adult Education Basic State Grants program will help States build quality programs that teach in context, use technology and achieve their target performance levels.

VP  
Core  
Summit -  
Models of  
Successful  
Collaboration  
w/ Labor  
Employment  
Partnerships  
& Act

OVAE/DAEL  
October 22, 1998

## **Division of Adult Education and Literacy Innovative Projects and Activities FY 97 and FY 98**

### **A. Impact of Federal Programs**

#### **1. *Dissemination of Lessons Learned and Survey of Federally Funded Workplace Literacy Programs***

- ♦ FY 97 funds were used to conduct a one-year project to synthesize final reports, including evaluation reports, from a sample of projects funded under the Workplace Literacy Program. ED will use the report to assess impact of WLP and to disseminate information on best practices.
- ♦ Over a two-year period the U.S. Conference Board will conduct a survey of the benefits of improving literacy skills in the workplace. Survey findings will be used to design technical assistance to state and local literacy service providers.

### **B. Using Technology to Improve Instruction and Administration**

#### **1. *Using Technology in Service Delivery (BAA)***

- ♦ This major project responds to Senate report language urging ED to use \$2 million increase for projects to improve the use of technology in delivery of adult education services.
- ♦ Contracts under the project support research and projects that explore new, creative and innovative applications of technology or that explore creative modifications of existing technologies to deliver adult basic education and literacy instruction, staff development, and related program support services to adult learners in the 21st century.

#### **2. *Distance Learning Initiatives***

- ♦ Series of projects to expand adult education services through use of distance learning technologies, i.e.:

##### **(a) *Crossroads Café II — Family Literacy Series***

National Programs funds would help support development of Crossroads Cafe II, a technology based distance learning family literacy series, in partnership with state education agencies, the INS, OESE, and a private non-profit organization (OVAE and OESE will each contribute \$500,000 per year.)

##### **(b) *Technology Information***

Resources—Links to ED Homepage and NIFL LINC'S Project

- ♦ Project to extend access of adult educators to the Clearinghouse research information, DAEL "353" projects, "best practices" materials, statistical data, and related materials on the OVAE Home Page, with a link to NIFL's electronic database (LINCS).

### **3. *Star Schools Literacy Link Evaluation Project***

- ♦ Modification to Literacy Link project to strengthen formative evaluation by doubling the sample of teachers from whom assessment data will be collected. This activity strengthens the overall evaluation design of LiteracyLink, and fosters the use of technology in staff development. .

### **4. *Instructional Technology (SBIR)***

- ♦ A Phase II Small Business Innovation Research project funded for 2 years of developmental work on instructional and/or informational resources in a CD-ROM format for adults with very low level competencies. The developmental work is based on a prior six-month feasibility study that the SBIR supported during the Phase I competition. .

## **C. Local Program Improvement**

### **1. *Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Teleconferences***

- ♦ Two satellite teleconferences on adults with learning disabilities to be broadcast in winter and spring of 1998-99. The first teleconference would be *Literacy in the Classroom . . . Looking at Adults with Learning Disabilities*. The second teleconference would be *Screening and Testing: Strategies to Accommodate Individuals with Learning Disabilities in the Classroom and the Workplace*.

### **2. *Improving the Effectiveness of Demonstration, Experimental, and Staff Development Projects in Adult Education***

- ♦ A four-phase project that will build on the *National Evaluation of the Section 353 Set-Aside for Teacher Training and Innovation in Adult Education*. The study will develop criteria for identifying the elements of projects that make them outstanding, that comprise "best practices," that demonstrate the principles of adult education theory and research findings, and that demonstrate high quality teaching.

### **3. *"What Works" Evaluation of Adult ESL Programs***

- ♦ A contract to AIR to conduct a major evaluation of ESL programs for low-literate adult learners. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of instructional techniques and program methods developed to serve low-literate ESL learners, evaluate assessment instruments, and identify the key elements of effective programs. A secondary purpose is to describe adult ESL at the classroom and program levels, through surveys, interviews, and in-depth case studies. Results of this study will be used to develop indicators and establish benchmarks of program effectiveness.

**4. Evaluation of Effective ABE Programs**

- Contract to Abt Associates to conduct a major evaluation of promising adult education basic skills programs for low-literate learners. The three phases of the study will include development of models of the key elements of effective programs for low-literate learners, pilot testing of models, and initiation of a national study to confirm models' effectiveness.

**5. Even Start Agency Cooperation and Collaboration Project - Building State Alliances for Family Literacy**

- Continues an Adult Education/Even Start collaborative project on building State alliances in developing family literacy projects. In FY 1997 project added focus on welfare reform, establishing collaborations with Head Start State Collaboration grantees, and building consensus around State content standards in family literacy. Lessons learned will be disseminated to all States.

**6. Learning Disabilities System Change Initiative in Eight National One-Stop Learning Centers**

- This project will integrate the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center (NALLDC) tool kit and training activities into an existing national network of One-Stop Learning Center Laboratories.

**7. Literacy Enhancement Materials**

- This project will develop and disseminate materials to low literacy parents that will help them provide a richer in-home learning environment for their children. Will complement the Department's America Reads initiative.

**D. Improving Performance and Evaluation Data****1. National Reporting System**

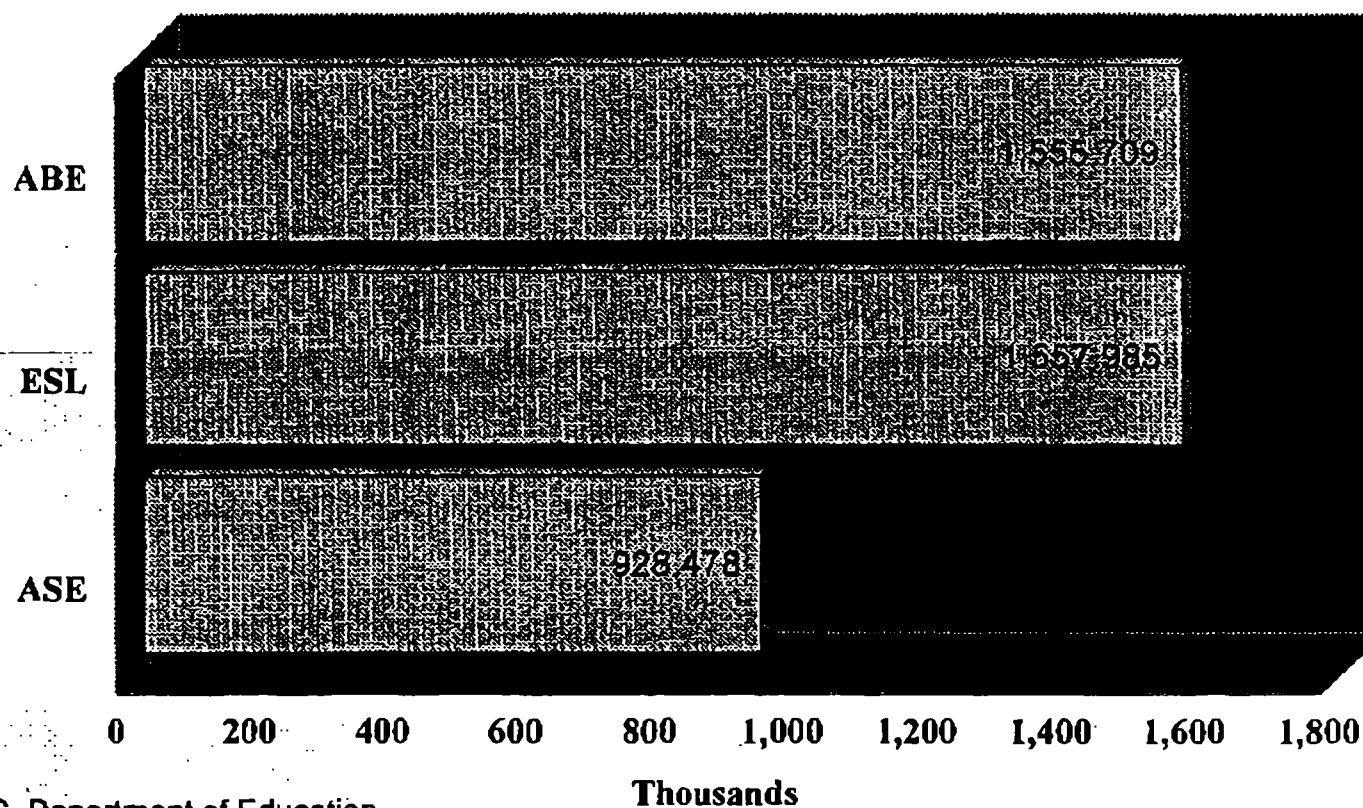
- Enhancement of contract to develop and implement a national results-based reporting system for programs supported under the AEA. Will strengthen accountability in the adult education delivery system and enable ED to collect and analyze State -reported performance data. This enhancement will focus on training State and local adult education and literacy services providers in the use of the National Reporting System.

**E. Professional Development for Adult Educators****1. Building Professional Development Partnerships for Adult Educators (Pro-Net)**

- Pro-Net is an electronic communications and staff development system used by State and local administrators. It is intended to be a national professional development network for staff development specialists. 1997 funds will support enhancement of Pro-Net through a number of activities.

# State-Administered Adult Education Program

## 1996 Enrollment



Source: U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Vocational and Adult Education  
Division of Adult Education and Literacy  
May 1998



**LITERACY SKILLS OF ADULTS  
AT "BELOW ADEQUATE LEVEL"**

|                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                           |                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>LEVEL 1</b><br>0-225<br>AVG. 198<br>21 TO 23%<br>40 TO 44M | ✓ Very limited in processing information<br>✓ Simple routine tasks:<br>total entry on deposit slip;<br>identify specific inf. in brief newspaper article<br><br>✓ Level 2: limited literacy skills; low-level inferences; calculate total cost of purchase | <b>LEVEL 2</b><br>226-275<br>AVG. 259<br>25 TO 28%<br>50M | <b>LEVEL 3</b><br>276-325<br>AVG. 298<br>32%<br>61M |
| 25%<br>62%<br>35%<br>27%<br>21%                               | IMMIGRANTS<br>LACK H.S. DIPLOMA<br>0 TO 8 YEARS<br>9 TO 12 YEARS<br>HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA                                                                                                                                                                    | 08%<br>26%<br>07%<br>19%<br>36%                           | 05%<br>08%<br>01%<br>07%<br>31%                     |
| 43%                                                           | BLACK/HISPANIC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 24%                                                       | 13%                                                 |
| 26%<br>19%                                                    | P-M-H CONDITION<br>VISUAL DIFFICULTY                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 13%<br>07%                                                | 07%<br>03%                                          |
| 44%<br>50%<br>\$240<br>18 TO 19                               | LIVE IN POVERTY<br>OUT OF LABOR FORCE<br>MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME<br>AVG. # WEEKS WORKED                                                                                                                                                                       | 23%<br>33%<br>\$281<br>27                                 | 12%<br>25%<br>\$339<br>35                           |
| 33%<br>70%                                                    | AGE 64 OR OLDER<br>DO NOT PERCEIVE AT RISK                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 18%<br>97%                                                | 09%                                                 |

**SUMMARY: "BELOW ADEQUATE LEVEL" INFORMATION PROCESSING SKILLS  
LEVELS 1 & 2**

1. CANNOT CONSISTENTLY RESPOND TO TASKS REQUIRING:
  - HIGHER LEVEL READING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS
  - INTEGRATION OR SYNTHESIZING OF INFORMATION FROM COMPLEX TEXTS
  - TWO OR MORE SEQUENTIAL QUANTITATIVE PROBLEMS;
2. RACIAL COMPOSITION: PREDOMINATELY BLACK, NATIVE AM., HISPANIC;
3. FAR LESS LIKELY THAN LITERATE PEERS TO BE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME, TO EARN HIGH WAGES, AND TO VOTE;
4. MAY BE "AT RISK" AS THE NATION'S ECONOMY AND SOCIAL FABRIC CONTINUE TO CHANGE.

## LITERACY LEVELS OF AMERICAN ADULTS (PROSE SCALE)

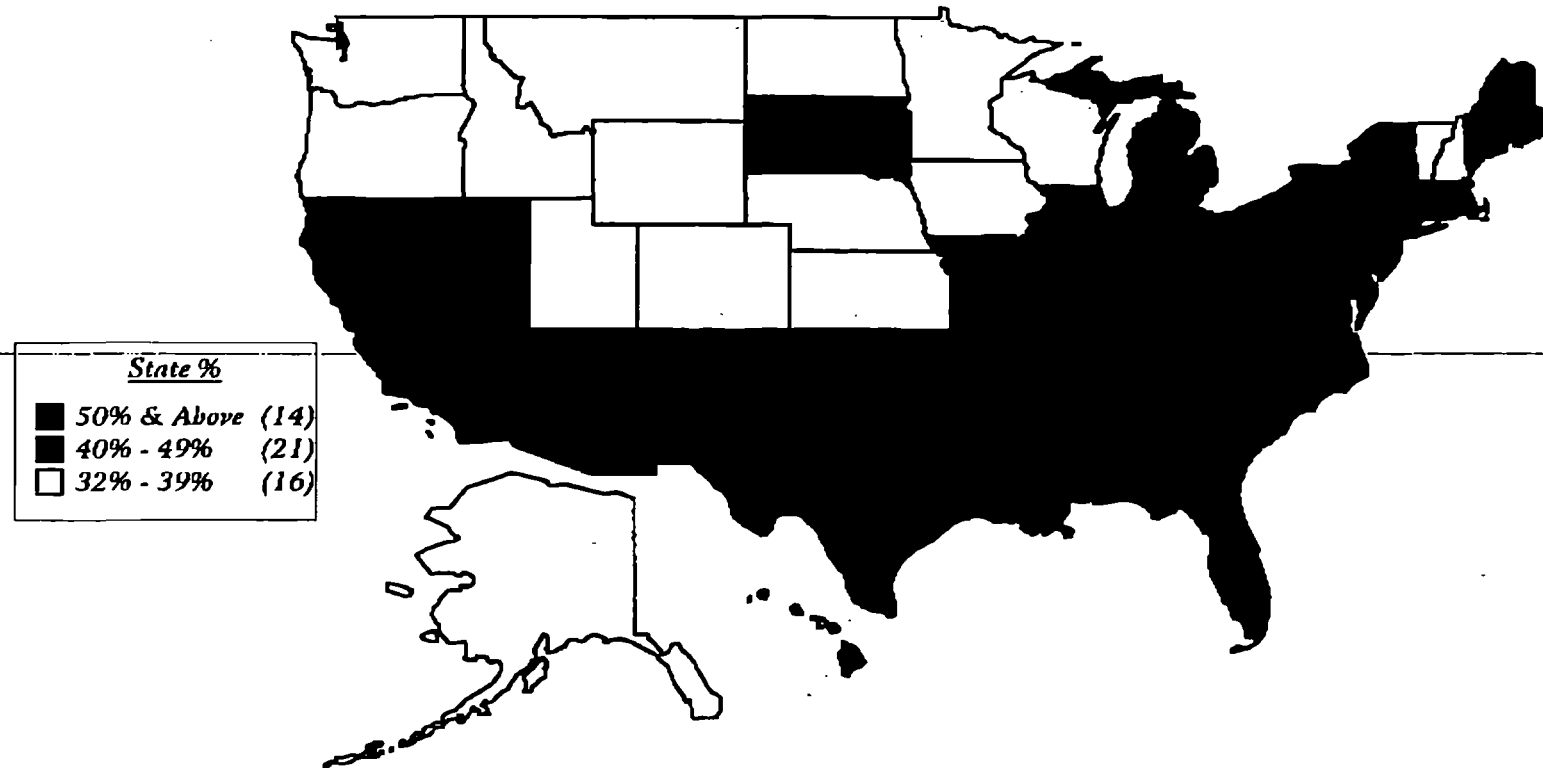
| <b>Literacy Level</b> | <b>Description of Level</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>% of Population</b> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Level 1               | Individuals have great difficulty with reading. They have very few basic skills or strategies available to them to decode and work with text. Generally, they are aware that they have problems.                                                                     | 21%                    |
| Level 2               | Individuals have limited skills; they read but they do not read well. Adults at this level can deal only with material that is simple and clearly laid out, material in which the tasks involved are not too complex. They often do not recognize their limitations. | 27%                    |
| Level 3               | Individuals read well, but may have some problems with more complex tasks. Considered by many countries to be a minimum desired skill level; some occupations may, however, require higher skills.                                                                   | 32%                    |
| Levels 4/5            | Individuals have high levels of literacy, with a wide range of reading skills and many strategies for dealing with complex materials. These adults can meet most reading demands and can handle new reading challenges.                                              | 20%                    |

SOURCE: National Adult Literacy Survey  
National Center for Education Statistics  
U.S. Department of Education  
September 1993

## The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)

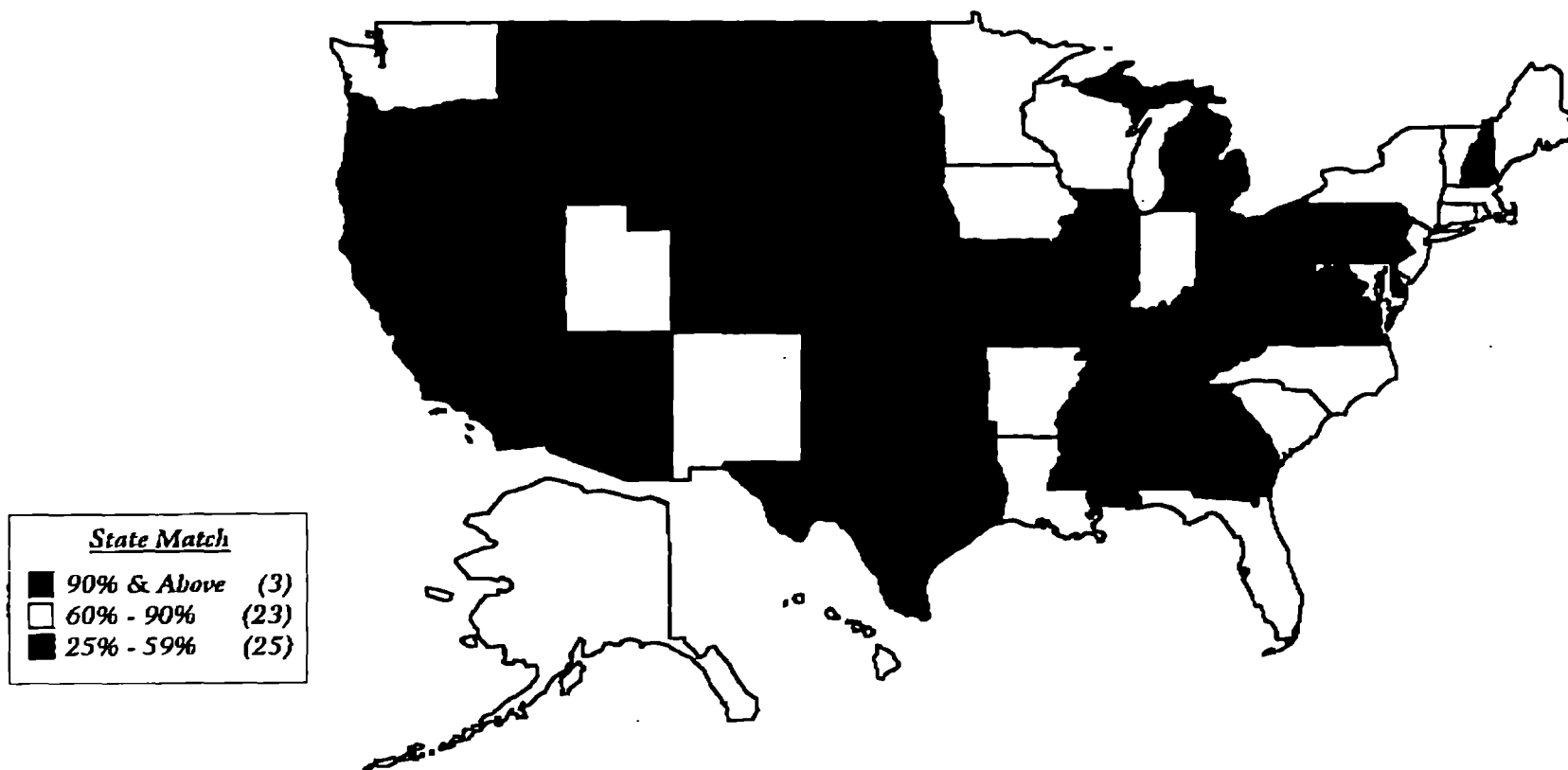
| <b>Level</b> | <b>Scale Score</b> | <b>Task Examples</b>                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Percentage of Adults</b>       |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>I</b>     | <b>0 to 225</b>    | Identify a country in a short article (P)<br>Sign your name (D)<br>Total a bank deposit entry (Q)                                                                                                               | P = 21%<br>D = 23%<br>Q = 22%     |
| <b>II</b>    | <b>226 to 275</b>  | Locate two items of information in article (P)<br>Locate intersection on a street map (D)<br>Calculate total costs of purchase on order form (Q)                                                                | P = 27%<br>D = 28%<br>Q = 25%     |
| <b>III</b>   | <b>276 to 325</b>  | Interpret instructions from an appliance warranty (P)<br>Use a sign-out sheet to respond to a call (D)<br>Use a calculator to determine discount on a bill (Q)                                                  | P = 32%<br>D = 31%<br>Q = 31%     |
| <b>IV</b>    | <b>326 to 375</b>  | State in writing an argument from a long article (P)<br>Identify correct % meeting specified conditions from a table of such information (D)<br>Determine correct change using information from a menu (Q)      | P = 17%<br><br>D = 15%<br>Q = 17% |
| <b>V</b>     | <b>376 to 500</b>  | Summarize two ways lawyers may challenge prospective jurors (P)<br>Use table of information to determine pattern in oil exports (D)<br>Calculate miles per gallon using information given on mileage record (Q) | P = 3%<br>D = 3%<br>Q = 4%        |

# Adults With Limited Literacy Skills Comprise Significant Percentage of State Adult Populations



% of State Adult Population in NALS Levels 1 & 2

## State-Administered Adult Education Program State Matching Expenditures - FY 1995 Expenditures



State Match is the State's Percentage Share of Total Expenditures

Prepared By: U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Vocational and Adult Education  
Division of Adult Education and Literacy  
September 1998

**State-Administered Adult Education Program**  
**Fiscal Year 1995 Expenditures**  
**(July 1, 1995 - June/September 30, 1997)**

| STATE or<br>OTHER AREA | TOTAL<br>FEDERAL<br>EXPENDITURES | TOTAL<br>STATE/LOCAL<br>EXPENDITURES | TOTAL<br>EXPENDITURES | STATE<br>MATCH* | 1995/1996<br>TOTAL<br>ENROLLMENT | COST<br>PER<br>STUDENT |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| ALABAMA                | \$5,079,031                      | \$4,931,022                          | \$10,010,053          | 49.26%          | 54,191                           | \$173                  |
| ALASKA                 | \$555,433                        | \$1,760,960                          | \$2,316,393           | 76.02%          | 7,147                            | \$317                  |
| ARIZONA                | \$3,326,597                      | \$3,556,600                          | \$6,883,197           | 51.67%          | 56,246                           | \$113                  |
| ARKANSAS               | \$3,073,140                      | \$15,712,041                         | \$18,785,181          | 83.64%          | 43,315                           | \$420                  |
| CALIFORNIA             | \$24,979,228                     | \$301,512,259                        | \$326,491,487         | 92.35%          | 1,291,370                        | \$252                  |
| COLORADO               | \$2,382,774                      | \$1,210,539                          | \$3,593,313           | 33.69%          | 15,458                           | \$225                  |
| CONNECTICUT            | \$2,922,708                      | \$22,129,841                         | \$25,052,349          | 88.33%          | 27,941                           | \$866                  |
| DELAWARE               | \$800,923                        | \$289,929                            | \$1,090,852           | 26.58%          | 3,956                            | \$252                  |
| DIST. of COLUMBIA      | \$881,081                        | \$5,465,913                          | \$6,346,994           | 86.12%          | 7,128                            | \$849                  |
| FLORIDA                | \$13,137,337                     | \$72,531,192                         | \$85,668,529          | 84.66%          | 450,575                          | \$189                  |
| GEORGIA                | \$7,175,669                      | \$2,605,006                          | \$9,780,675           | 26.63%          | 91,845                           | \$97                   |
| HAWAII                 | \$1,057,406                      | \$2,118,939                          | \$3,176,345           | 68.71%          | 82,897                           | \$48                   |
| IDAHO                  | \$1,030,375                      | \$401,144                            | \$1,431,519           | 28.02%          | 10,472                           | \$130                  |
| ILLINOIS               | \$10,498,723                     | \$7,320,000                          | \$17,818,723          | 41.08%          | 99,706                           | \$173                  |
| INDIANA                | \$5,359,254                      | \$25,029,679                         | \$30,388,933          | 82.36%          | 39,886                           | \$748                  |
| IOWA                   | \$2,358,854                      | \$5,181,830                          | \$7,520,684           | 68.64%          | 38,810                           | \$192                  |
| KANSAS                 | \$2,049,866                      | \$800,000                            | \$2,849,866           | 28.07%          | 13,927                           | \$197                  |
| KENTUCKY               | \$4,857,098                      | \$2,542,499                          | \$7,399,597           | 34.36%          | 31,885                           | \$217                  |
| LOUISIANA              | \$4,939,431                      | \$7,748,360                          | \$12,687,791          | 61.07%          | 47,712                           | \$257                  |
| MAINE                  | \$1,232,841                      | \$5,851,467                          | \$7,084,308           | 82.60%          | 17,097                           | \$210                  |
| MARYLAND               | \$4,188,409                      | \$8,191,018                          | \$10,379,427          | 59.65%          | 28,478                           | \$360                  |
| MASSACHUSETTS          | \$4,933,272                      | \$10,501,480                         | \$15,434,752          | 68.04%          | 13,295                           | \$1,114                |
| MICHIGAN               | \$8,444,659                      | \$181,300,000                        | \$189,744,659         | 95.55%          | 141,733                          | \$1,336                |
| MINNESOTA              | \$3,260,087                      | \$19,925,199                         | \$23,185,286          | 85.94%          | 37,734                           | \$608                  |
| MISSISSIPPI            | \$3,416,436                      | \$1,477,027                          | \$4,893,463           | 30.18%          | 27,416                           | \$172                  |
| MISSOURI               | \$5,183,354                      | \$3,197,663                          | \$8,381,017           | 38.15%          | 34,010                           | \$238                  |
| MONTANA                | \$850,980                        | \$781,387                            | \$1,632,367           | 47.87%          | 6,321                            | \$250                  |
| NEBRASKA               | \$1,363,327                      | \$521,546                            | \$1,884,873           | 27.67%          | 8,060                            | \$223                  |
| NEVADA                 | \$1,267,982                      | \$669,814                            | \$1,937,796           | 34.57%          | 20,994                           | \$86                   |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE          | \$1,047,031                      | \$1,221,270                          | \$2,268,301           | 53.84%          | 5,428                            | \$411                  |
| NEW JERSEY             | \$7,091,481                      | \$23,265,454                         | \$30,356,935          | 76.64%          | 38,166                           | \$779                  |
| NEW MEXICO             | \$1,645,324                      | \$2,932,405                          | \$4,577,729           | 64.06%          | 36,617                           | \$123                  |
| NEW YORK               | \$17,382,385                     | \$79,448,582                         | \$96,810,967          | 82.07%          | 201,321                          | \$477                  |
| NORTH CAROLINA         | \$7,533,405                      | \$26,785,481                         | \$34,318,886          | 78.05%          | 117,827                          | \$289                  |
| NORTH DAKOTA           | \$783,641                        | \$484,675                            | \$1,268,316           | 38.21%          | 3,229                            | \$369                  |
| OHIO                   | \$10,219,215                     | \$8,733,485                          | \$18,952,700          | 46.08%          | 107,701                          | \$171                  |
| OKLAHOMA               | \$3,218,742                      | \$1,082,277                          | \$4,301,019           | 25.16%          | 30,198                           | \$137                  |
| OREGON                 | \$2,384,072                      | \$25,314,468                         | \$27,698,540          | 91.39%          | 37,479                           | \$736                  |
| PENNSYLVANIA           | \$11,510,802                     | \$11,985,753                         | \$23,496,555          | 51.01%          | 51,938                           | \$436                  |
| RHODE ISLAND           | \$1,280,287                      | \$2,082,021                          | \$3,372,308           | 62.04%          | 5,607                            | \$556                  |
| SOUTH CAROLINA         | \$4,206,641                      | \$10,483,674                         | \$14,690,315          | 71.36%          | 106,470                          | \$136                  |
| SOUTH DAKOTA           | \$833,858                        | \$400,790                            | \$1,234,648           | 32.46%          | 4,678                            | \$250                  |
| TENNESSEE              | \$6,076,500                      | \$2,828,219                          | \$8,904,719           | 31.76%          | 50,889                           | \$169                  |
| TEXAS                  | \$17,717,045                     | \$8,903,888                          | \$26,620,933          | 33.45%          | 236,347                          | \$107                  |
| UTAH                   | \$1,271,922                      | \$5,947,704                          | \$7,219,626           | 82.38%          | 35,127                           | \$202                  |
| VERMONT                | \$670,526                        | \$3,113,129                          | \$3,783,655           | 82.28%          | 4,698                            | \$770                  |
| VIRGINIA               | \$6,010,379                      | \$5,285,519                          | \$11,295,898          | 46.79%          | 25,410                           | \$439                  |
| WASHINGTON             | \$3,528,230                      | \$9,674,180                          | \$13,202,410          | 73.28%          | 45,235                           | \$286                  |
| WEST VIRGINIA          | \$2,489,983                      | \$2,076,504                          | \$4,546,467           | 45.67%          | 24,712                           | \$175                  |
| WISCONSIN              | \$4,194,417                      | \$7,827,540                          | \$12,021,957          | 65.11%          | 73,231                           | \$161                  |
| WYOMING                | \$557,491                        | \$409,180                            | \$966,671             | 42.33%          | 3,860                            | \$238                  |
| PUERTO RICO            | \$5,780,791                      | \$1,956,356                          | \$7,737,147           | 25.29%          | 63,345                           | \$112                  |
| GUAM                   | \$213,331                        | \$0                                  | \$213,331             | 0.00%           | 1,365                            | \$124                  |
| NO. MARIANA COL        | \$154,035                        | \$0                                  | \$154,035             | 0.00%           | 366                              | \$284                  |
| VIRGIN ISLANDS         | na                               | na                                   | na                    | na              | 1,325                            | na                     |
| UNITED STATES          | \$248,367,789                    | \$955,496,708                        | \$1,203,864,497       | 79.33%          | 4,042,172                        | \$292                  |

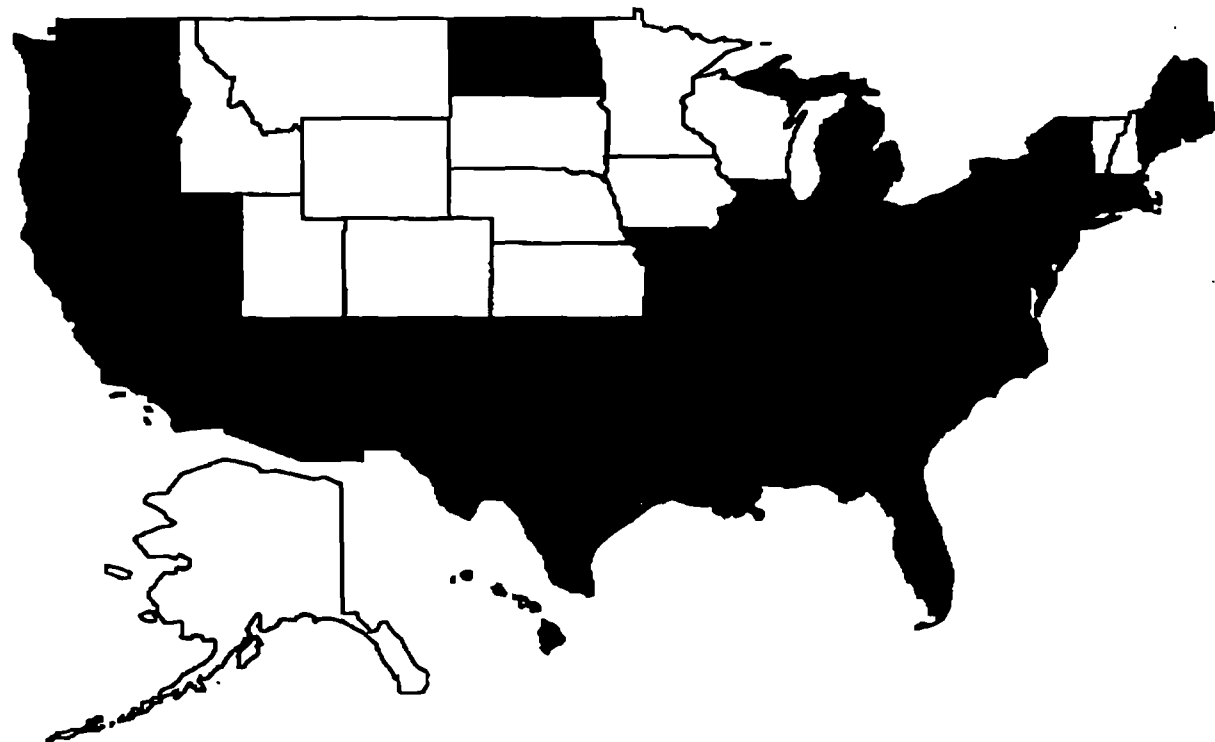
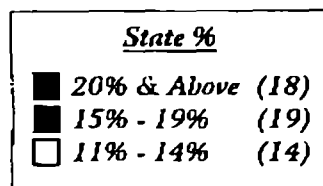
\*State Match is the State's Percentage Share of Total Expenditures

Source: U.S. Department of Education

Division of Adult Education and Literacy

AUGUST 1998

## % of State Adult Population in NALS Level 1



### Adults Who Read and Compute at Very Low Levels

Source: U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Vocational and Adult Education  
Division of Adult Education and Literacy  
October 1998

## SYNTHETIC ESTIMATES OF NALS LITERACY PROFICIENCIES (1990 Census)

| STATE or<br>OTHER AREA | MEAN<br>PROFICIENCY | COMBINED        |                 |                    |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
|                        |                     | %<br>in LEVEL 1 | %<br>in LEVEL 2 | %<br>in LEVELS 3-5 |
| ALABAMA                | 263                 | 21              | 34              | 46                 |
| ALASKA                 | 294                 | 5               | 19              | 76                 |
| ARIZONA                | 279                 | 12              | 27              | 61                 |
| ARKANSAS               | 264                 | 19              | 33              | 47                 |
| CALIFORNIA             | 271                 | 19              | 25              | 56                 |
| COLORADO               | 291                 | 7               | 21              | 71                 |
| CONNECTICUT            | 279                 | 13              | 26              | 61                 |
| DELAWARE               | 276                 | 13              | 30              | 57                 |
| DIST. OF COLUMBIA      | 254                 | 31              | 34              | 35                 |
| FLORIDA                | 263                 | 19              | 34              | 47                 |
| GEORGIA                | 267                 | 18              | 33              | 49                 |
| HAWAII                 | 275                 | 14              | 26              | 60                 |
| IDAHO                  | 286                 | 8               | 23              | 69                 |
| ILLINOIS               | 276                 | 16              | 27              | 58                 |
| INDIANA                | 281                 | 10              | 28              | 62                 |
| IOWA                   | 284                 | 9               | 23              | 68                 |
| KANSAS                 | 284                 | 9               | 24              | 66                 |
| KENTUCKY               | 268                 | 18              | 31              | 51                 |
| LOUISIANA              | 260                 | 23              | 34              | 44                 |
| MAINE                  | 279                 | 10              | 27              | 62                 |
| MARYLAND               | 274                 | 16              | 31              | 54                 |
| MASSACHUSETTS          | 279                 | 13              | 25              | 62                 |
| MICHIGAN               | 280                 | 12              | 27              | 61                 |
| MINNESOTA              | 289                 | 8               | 20              | 72                 |
| MISSISSIPPI            | 257                 | 25              | 34              | 41                 |
| MISSOURI               | 278                 | 13              | 27              | 60                 |
| MONTANA                | 288                 | 7               | 23              | 70                 |
| NEBRASKA               | 285                 | 9               | 23              | 68                 |
| NEVADA                 | 281                 | 10              | 27              | 63                 |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE          | 285                 | 8               | 24              | 68                 |
| NEW JERSEY             | 271                 | 17              | 28              | 54                 |
| NEW MEXICO             | 274                 | 15              | 28              | 57                 |
| NEW YORK               | 266                 | 21              | 29              | 50                 |
| NORTH CAROLINA         | 268                 | 18              | 32              | 50                 |
| NORTH DAKOTA           | 283                 | 12              | 20              | 68                 |
| OHIO                   | 280                 | 11              | 28              | 61                 |
| OKLAHOMA               | 272                 | 14              | 33              | 53                 |
| OREGON                 | 287                 | 8               | 24              | 68                 |
| PENNSYLVANIA           | 273                 | 14              | 30              | 56                 |
| RHODE ISLAND           | 273                 | 16              | 27              | 57                 |
| SOUTH CAROLINA         | 264                 | 20              | 34              | 46                 |
| SOUTH DAKOTA           | 281                 | 11              | 23              | 65                 |
| TENNESSEE              | 267                 | 18              | 32              | 50                 |
| TEXAS                  | 263                 | 21              | 31              | 48                 |
| UTAH                   | 293                 | 5               | 21              | 74                 |
| VERMONT                | 283                 | 9               | 24              | 67                 |
| VIRGINIA               | 273                 | 16              | 29              | 55                 |
| WASHINGTON             | 288                 | 7               | 23              | 70                 |
| WEST VIRGINIA          | 267                 | 17              | 32              | 50                 |
| WISCONSIN              | 284                 | 10              | 23              | 67                 |
| WYOMING                | 290                 | 6               | 21              | 72                 |
| UNITED STATES          | 273                 | 16              | 28              | 56                 |

SOURCE: S. Reder, "Synthetic Estimates of NALS Literacy Proficiencies From 1990 Census Microdata", Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, August 1994

PREPARED BY: U.S. Department of Education,  
Division of Adult Education and Literacy  
9/15/94



## United States Department of Education

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Office of the Assistant Secretary

*Add wellfare to work  
sentence*

### ☆ Expanding the Capacity and Quality of The Adult Education System

It is proposed that a significant increase in funding take place for the Adult Education Basic State Grant program to improve program quality and capacity to serve.

**How it Works.** Additional funding for the Adult Education Basic State Grants program will help States build adult education systems that: 1) serve substantially more adult learners 2.) offer improved services 3.) effectively measure and report educational outcomes.

The Adult Education Act is currently the major source of Federal support for basic skills improvement. Basic grants to States are allocated by a formula based upon the number of adults, over age 16, out of school and who have not completed high school. States distribute funds to local providers through a competitive process based upon State-established funding criteria. Local programs of instruction emphasize the acquisition of basic skills including: reading, writing, computation, communication and problem solving. Courses of instruction include Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English as a Second Language (ESL).

Under the new Workforce Investment Act, signed by President Clinton on August 7, 1998, states will be challenged to dramatically improve the quality of adult education programs and be accountable for results. For the first time ever, local programs will be required to use practices that research has shown to improve educational outcomes for adults, such as: effectively using technology, employing well-trained instructors, providing learning in real- life contexts such as the workplace, and offering expanded support services.

**What it Costs.** Funds are being requested to increase the Adult Education Basic State Grant program from \$365 in FY 1999 to \$445 million in FY 2000 -- with funding in subsequent fiscal years rising to at least \$1 billion by FY 2005. Over the last several years, Congress has consistently appropriated more for the basic State grant program than the Administration has requested.

States are currently required by law to provide a 25% match for adult education funds, but recent assessments show the federal investment leverages more than three times the required match in State and local funds for adult education and literacy programs. The average per learner expenditure is less than \$300 annually. Moreover, using constant 1995 dollars, spending per participant dropped from \$274 in 1966 to in 1998, despite an increased federal

investment.

**Rationale.** Expanding our investment in the Adult Education Basic State Grant program is critical not only because of the requirements of the new Workforce Investment Act, but because the demand for services is escalating.

The provisions in the Workforce Investment Act may assist programs to be more effective but only if additional funds are available. The impact of a substantial increase would vary from State to State as they allocate resources according to their unique priorities such as increasing investments in ESL-Civics Instruction or expanding the workplace education infrastructure. Because the Act gives priority to program improvement it is expected that States would initially use the increases to provide more intensive services, hire more professional teachers, and effectively employ new technologies.

Additionally, the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act make it necessary for States to develop reporting systems and create certificates for what adult learners should know and be able to do when they exit programs. The Department is working with State to develop a national results based reporting system using a common set of outcome measures and a uniform data collection system. The requested funds for FY 2000 - 2001 would provide States with resources to put in place these new systems that are critical to improving program quality and getting results.

Increases to FY 2005 would substantially increase the capacity of the system. More than 4 million adults in 4,000 adult learning centers participate in adult education annually. Between 1990 and 1994, the Adult Education State Grant program enabled 1.5 million adults to complete high school or earn a GED. Yet, the 1994 National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs found that current programs serve only a small percentage of adults in need of services and that many participants leave before they achieve any literacy gains (primarily for personal reasons such as child care and transportation that are unrelated to instructional program quality).

The 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey found that more than 1 in 5 -- or more than 40 million Americans -- demonstrated literacy and numeracy skills at or below the 5th grade level (Level 1). These adults usually cannot locate an intersection on a street map, identify and enter background information on a social security card application, or calculate the total costs of purchase from an order form. Over 25 to 28 percent, or about 50 million additional adults, demonstrated skills between the 6th and 8th grade levels (Level 2). These individuals cannot meet the skill requirements for entry-level work in a modern manufacturing plant.

76 percent of adults 65 and older, and around 40 percent of adults aged 19 to 39, scored in the lowest two literacy levels, i.e. proficient at or below the 8th grade level. 13 percent of young American adults (aged 25 to 29) have not completed high school or earned an equivalency certificate -- including 39 percent of young Hispanics.

Over the last decade, adult education enrollment has increased by nearly one third. Adult basic education enrollments have increased by 46 percent. The adult education system is currently experiencing an influx of out-of-

school youth whose goal is secondary education completion.

English language instruction for limited English proficient adults is the fastest growing component of the adult education program, with enrollments increasing 70 percent in the last ten years. Currently, enrollments in English literacy programs represent 40 percent of all adult education enrollments and six states (California, Florida, Texas, New York, Illinois and Arizona) enroll almost all of these learners. New immigrants wishing to enroll in English literacy remain on long waiting lists -- large cities such as Los Angeles and New York City use a lottery system to determine who on the waiting list "wins" the opportunity to attend class.



## United States Department of Education

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Office of the Assistant Secretary

### ☆ Jump-Start for Literacy: Quality Teaching for Adult Learners

**Jump-Start for Literacy** would improve the quality of adult basic skills instruction by supporting professional development for adult education teachers over a five-year period. The initiative would make funds available to States that volunteer to participate by dedicating State and local funds for adult education inservice teacher training.

**How It Works:** States receiving assistance would agree to provide State and local funds to match a federal grant at the 25% level to upgrade the adult education teacher force by providing specialized preservice and inservice training for teachers in:

- teaching subject matter to adults in contexts such as work or citizenship
- teaching to high standards;
- • effectively teaching learning disabled adults;
- effectively assessing learning gains; and
- effectively using technology as an educational tool for adults

90% of  
training is  
paid through  
federal

**What it Costs.** This initiative would allow States an opportunity to implement innovative and integrated professional development and training systems. If all States participated, the cost of the initiative would be \$50 million annually for five years or \$250 million dollars. Teachers would be paid for the time spent in training.

formula  
volunteers  
could also be pd.

**Rationale.** Most adult education teachers work part-time. Many are elementary and secondary education teachers who do not have formal training in teaching adult learners. A majority of adult education teachers are employed by public school districts. Other organizations that employ adult education teachers include community colleges, universities, large corporations, speciality schools, job training centers and religious or community-based organizations.

A majority of States do not have a system for certifying adult education teachers. Many ABE and ESL teachers -- as well as volunteer instructors -- receive little training in subject matter content or in the process of teaching. Improving the quality of instructors is a critical component of reforms envisioned under the Workforce Investment Act and this five-year investment will help jump-start teacher preparation, recruitment, and professional development capacity.

allow for training for staff & volunteers  
- paying vol. for training

MEP - Carol Ann  
Mark Trope, contact

Manufacturing Extension Partnership  
(Clinton '92)  
partner



## United States Department of Education

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Office of the Assistant Secretary

1/2 time  
manufacturing  
1/2 services

### ☆ Filling the Gap: A 21st Century Workforce Education Initiative

The **21st Century Workforce Education Initiative** would provide for State Workplace Extension Service coordinators who would work actively with employers on how to use the workplace most effectively as the newest learning environment.

**How It Works.** Regional coordinators within States would provide technical assistance to help employers develop and implement workplace education programs, locate instructors with special expertise in providing workplace education, and broker services customized to meet individual business needs, especially for small and medium sized businesses. States would receive additional funding in their adult education Basic State grant program allotments to support networks of regional, within State, Workplace Extension Service coordinators that would promote and link workforce education efforts with the local workforce boards.

**What it Costs.** If each State funded an average of five Workplace Extension Service coordinators, approximately \$12.5 million would be needed.

**Rationale.** The Conference Board, under contract with ED/OVAE is documenting the benefits of workplace education programs. When research is completed in February 1999 the project will begin an outreach campaign to enlist the support of employers and unions nationwide in developing workplace education programs. The success of the Workplace Education Initiative will depend, in part, on the ability of State adult education systems to meet the demand that the Conference Board project will generate among employers and unions.

Preliminary results from our new Conference Board survey indicate that employers expected and received the following skill improvements for workers in workplace education programs: improved ability to listen, improved ability to understand and apply information; greater willingness to learn; positive attitudes about change; better team work; improved ability to use documents, numbers and manuals; improved capacity to solve problems and make decisions; and improved ability to use English to communicate in the workplace.

A survey of Fortune 1000 executives showed that 90 percent felt that illiteracy is hurting productivity and profitability in their businesses. Other documented negative economic impacts of illiteracy on corporate performance include: reduced adaptability of firms to implement new technology and production techniques; reduced product quality; decreased productivity; reduced health and safety performance; increased difficulty in assigning staff to new

Family Investment Centers - HUD  
have \$ for support services  
facility renovation

Who should

responsibilities; and higher training costs.

Documented Workplace education benefits include: increases in corporate earnings of 11-17%; empirical estimates of a return on workplace literacy training of up to 25%; and reduced employee turnover. A Magnavox evaluation of its literacy skills training program demonstrated a total economic benefit of \$321,600 -- an average of \$10,720 per employee. Training costs were \$38,233 (or an average of \$1,275 per employee) with a net total benefit to Magnavox of \$283,367. Another study of a workplace education program documented a 1.45 percent annual productivity improvement as a result of delivering workplace education, or an increase of \$2,000 more productivity per worker.

Yet, a study conducted by the National Alliance of Business found that without ongoing technical assistance as a workplace education strategy is being implemented, real progress in improving workers' basic skills is most often not achieved. Workplace Extension Service coordinators would fill in this gap.



## United States Department of Education

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Office of the Assistant Secretary

### ☆ **America Learns Technology Challenge Grants**

The purpose of the grants would be to serve as the catalyst for the creation of public-private partnerships that develop new and innovative applications of technology, expand access, and make significant contributions to improving adult learning.

**How it Works.** America Learns grants would provide seed capital in three areas to develop and demonstrate proven practices and products that may be successfully used in adult education programs across the country.

#### *I. Content/Software Development*

The government would cost-share with the private sector in the development of higher-quality materials for adult education. Funded activities might include states' and other partners working with private sector software designers to promote the development or adaptation of interactive content and products to better meet the needs of adult learners -- using such devices as multi-media CD-ROM, interactive television, or game players.

**Cost:** \$20 million for around 10 grants of \$1 - 2 million each

#### *II. America Learns Demonstrations*

The government would provide matching grants to communities that effectively deploy and evaluate the use of new technologies to improve adult education delivery and service. Grants could be used to support multi-state consortia who are developing and providing virtual adult education instruction on a multi-State or national basis and using proven models that help adults learn anytime/anywhere. Technology projects could focus on particular fields of technology (such as video or Internet access), instructional areas (such as English literacy or learning disabilities) geographic areas (such as urban or rural locations) and could be carried out by consortia of contiguous or noncontiguous States.

**Cost:** \$20 million for 80 grants of around \$250,000 per pilot

### *III. Community Access Centers*

The Department will fund in FY 99 a program to serve as the catalyst for the expansion and development of model community technology centers (CTCs) in low-income urban and rural communities. These centers would provide access to information technology, and other services, for disadvantaged adults. Eligible applicants would include partnerships, or consortia members, such as postsecondary education institutions, local adult education systems, vocational-technical programs, one-stop employment centers, and business.

**Cost:** \$10 million was appropriated in FY 1999. It is proposed that an additional \$10 million be requested in FY 2000 to continue the expansion and development of CTCs. It is estimated that the range of awards would be between \$75,000 and \$300,000 and, at the FY 2000 level, fund up to 150 centers.

**Rationale.** Rolling out *America Learns* grants would help expand access to adult education by focusing federal investments on developing innovative products and approaches that use data, voice, video and fiber optics technology to link at-risk adults with state-of-the-art basic skills services they can use anytime\anywhere-- in classrooms, libraries or the privacy of their homes.

Under the new reauthorization, States and localities must give priority to adult education activities that, among other priorities, effectively employ technology, including the use of computers. *America Learns* would serve as the testbed for products and systems innovations that would be used by programs across the nation.

A body of research shows that technology provides: opportunities for learners to get immediate feedback and individual attention; the possibility to engage learners in the instructional process; a wider array of instructional methods; and presentation of complex material in more concrete and visual way.

On July 28, 1998 the Department of Commerce released *Falling through the Net II: New Data on the Digital Divide* showing that although more Americans now own computers, minorities and low-income households are still far less likely to have computers or on-line access to the internet than white or more affluent households. Most alarmingly, the report revealed that the "digital divide" is growing.

In citing the substantial pockets of technology "have-nots" among low income, minorities, and the young -- particularly in rural areas and central cities -- and the time it would take to get them connected at home, *the report advocated that it was essential that schools, libraries, and other community technology centers provide computer access.* Community technology centers can serve as an effective means for providing access to technology and information to students and adults that have been denied access to technology and its related outcomes.



## United States Department of Education

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Office of the Assistant Secretary



### ESL Civics Initiative: Common Ground Partnerships

**Common Ground Partnerships** would allow States or localities significantly impacted by immigration to volunteer to put in place systemwide implementation of English as a Second Language/civics programs that would address four critical areas in helping immigrants adapt to their new lives in America.

**How It Works:** Hoping to make new lives in the United States, recent immigrants are awaiting assistance in the areas of: acquisition of English literacy skills; knowledge about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; understanding of participation in American culture; and life skills necessary to function well in daily life. All of these areas promote productive employment.

*Common Ground Partnerships* could be targeted to the six or twelve States that are home to a majority of immigrants as well as to localities within other States that display significant concentrations of immigrant populations in need of services. *Common Ground Partnerships* would replace the discretionary ESL demonstrations proposed for FY 2000 at the \$20M level but would require proposals from each State in order to operate the program under the discretionary "National Activities" portion of the Workforce Investment Act after appropriations language was in place to override set aside requirements of the law. *Common Ground Partnerships* would be cooperative agreements with the Department so that design and implementation of each State's activities could be worked through together and the Department would be party to changes made in the plans.

States with the highest density of ESL participants include: California; New York; Texas; Arizona; Florida; Michigan; Hawaii; Illinois; New Jersey; Georgia; Oregon; and Pennsylvania.

**What it Costs.** At the \$40M level, State grants would be given of from \$6.6 to about \$3.3M, depending on whether the design accommodated six or twelve ESL States. If the proposal includes services to localities that are home to high concentrations of immigrants--notably cities that are not included in the list of highest density States for ESL participants receiving Statewide grants above--\$15 - \$20M more would be required to deliver from 20-40 local programs annually.

**Rationale.** One out of every five foreign-born persons came to the United States in the last five years. Twice as many came per year during the 1990's than during the 1970's. About 4.5 M persons arrived in the five-year period between 1990 and 1994 while 4.8M came during the decade of the 1970's. For the 4.5 M most recent immigrants,

Mexico and Russia are the two origin countries. Over a quarter (1.3M) came from Mexico and an additional 243,000 came from Russia. Other countries with large numbers of recent immigrants include Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, India and El Salvador.

On average recent immigrants are much younger than natives. Those who came to the United States between 1990 and 1994 have a median age of only 26 years, compared to almost 33 years of natives. About 59.4 percent of the recent immigrants are between age 18 and 44, while only 40.7 percent of natives are in this age range. Of the 4.5 million recent immigrants, about 43 percent are of Hispanic origin. In Texas and Florida respectively, 70 percent and 61 percent of all recent immigrants are of Hispanic origin, while in California and New Jersey, Asian immigrants account for 28 percent and 25 percent of recent immigrants.

Comparisons of the educational attainment of the recent immigrant and natives show several extremes. Immigrants are less likely to have graduated from high school than natives. While one-third of the recent immigrants do not have high school diploma or equivalent, only 17 percent of natives are not high school graduates.

In 1993 recent immigrants aged 16 and over also had the lowest median income (\$8,393) of all immigrants by period of entry into the United States. Their median income was substantially lower than the median income of \$15,876 for natives. Part of this is related to the relatively high unemployment rate of the recent immigrants. While the unemployment rates for natives and naturalized citizens were 6.8 and 5.9 percent respectively, unemployment hit 12.2 percent for recent immigrants in 1993.



## United States Department of Education

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Office of the Assistant Secretary

### ☆ The High Skill Communities Campaign

The High Skill Communities initiative would create a framework in which States and local communities could mobilize and implement, according to their needs, strategies to promote lifelong learning and literacy and accelerate progress in meeting state and national goals related to adult education and lifelong learning.

**How it Works.** Modeled after Georgia's successful Certified Literate Community Program, and building on community engagement efforts underway through Goals 2000, this initiative would create a framework for States and localities to develop and expand lifelong learning opportunities.

The High Skills Communities initiative would result in a community mobilization effort to assess their needs in the area of adult and lifelong learning, outline goals, create an action plan, take concrete steps to build a community in which lifelong learning is the norm, and to assess progress.

A "community lifelong learning assessment toolkit" would be developed for use. U.S. Department of Education estimates of state\local literacy levels and Census data would be available and could used to establish baseline data and set community goals. The toolkit would provide tools for assessment, organizing a campaign, building community partnerships, and submitting applications (with examples of bylaws, surveys, plans, report forms, resolutions\letters, budgets, and administrator job descriptions).

#### **Costs.**

**Option 1: Non-funded** The Campaign could be launched as a national challenge with states choosing to participate and using their own funding -- with the Vice President or President holding an annual recognition ceremony for exemplary state and local efforts.

**Option 2: Funded** \$15 million in federal funding could be requested to fund state coordinators and provide substate grants for outreach and partnership building. If 30 states applied to participate average awards of \$500,000 would be made.

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***A Model: The Georgia Certified Literate Community Program***

**The Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP) promotes literacy in Georgia by making literacy a community-wide commitment. A broad variety of community resources are mobilized to promote and support literacy training. The CLCP is a business-education-government partnership resulting in improved literacy levels of children, families, and workers in an entire community. The program began in 1989 with five pilot communities. Currently the CLCP has 38 participants with twenty-five other communities in various stages of organizing.**

**The Georgia Office of Adult Literacy provides a full-time Certified Community Program Executive Director who is responsible for providing technical assistance to communities as they develop the structure to attain Participant certification. A community that is accepted into the program receives certification twice, first when the community meets eight criteria for becoming a Certified Literate Community Participant and later when the community meets all qualifications for achieving the designation Certified Literate Community.**

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# NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY *Policy Update*



REPORT FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

## ***Workforce Investment Act Offers Opportunities for Adult and Family Literacy***

- September 21, 1998 -

Last month, the President signed the *Workforce Investment Act of 1998* into law. The new law consolidates over 50 employment, training, and literacy programs -- including the *National Literacy Act*, *Adult Education Act*, and *Job Training Partnership Act* -- into three block grants to states: one for adult education and family literacy, one for disadvantaged youth, and one for adult employment and training. Title II of the new law replaces the *Adult Education Act* and continues the federal investment in adult education and family literacy for five more years.

Many elements of the new law will have an impact on the adult education and family literacy system. For example, in order to maximize the integration of services for individuals, the law creates a collaborative planning process at the state level. While the planning process includes employment and training as well as adult education and literacy, the actual administration, operation, funding, and reporting of adult education and literacy remain separate.

This *Policy Update* focuses on Title II of the new law, the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act*.

### **Goals**

While the old *Adult Education Act* allowed states to use federal funds for family literacy services, the new law puts family literacy on equal footing with adult basic education and English as a Second Language (ESL) services.

The new law sets three goals for adult education and literacy:

1. Assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.
2. Assist adults who are parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children.
3. Assist adults in completing high school or the equivalent.

## **Grant to States**

Like the old *Adult Education Act*, the *Workforce Investment Act* authorizes the federal government to spend federal funds on adult education and literacy. Most of this federal investment is through the Adult Education State Grant program, which now totals \$345 million annually. States each received from \$668,054 (Alaska) to \$38,209,485 (California) through this grant program this year. (See page 8 for a state-by-state breakdown.)

### *Formula Change*

The new law changes the formula the federal government uses to divide the Adult Education State Grant funding among states. The old formula took into account the number of adults age 16 and older in the state without a high school diploma (or the equivalent) and not enrolled in high school. The *Workforce Investment Act* changes the formula to include only adults age 16-61. This does *not* mean that states cannot continue to use these funds to serve adults over the age of 61. Rather, it just changes how state allotments are calculated. As a result of this change, states with a large population over age 61 may receive a smaller percentage of Adult Education State Grant funds next year. Despite this change, the law requires that next year each state must receive at least 90 percent of the amount it received this year.

After receiving their federal allotments based on the formula, state agencies<sup>1</sup> use most of the funding to award grants to local programs through a competitive process. They can also use some of the funding for state leadership activities and state administrative activities. The following chart compares how states allocated their grant money under the *Adult Education Act* with how they are supposed to allocate it under the *Workforce Investment Act*.

| <b>Percent Under the<br/>Adult Education Act</b> | <b>Percent Under the<br/>Workforce Investment Act</b> | <b>Activity</b>                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 80                                               | 82.5                                                  | Grants to local programs        |
| 15                                               | 12.5                                                  | State leadership activities     |
| 5                                                | 5                                                     | State administrative activities |

## **Grants to Local Programs**

The *Workforce Investment Act* establishes specific criteria for state agencies to consider in awarding grants to local programs. These criteria -- which include the program's past effectiveness, intensity, duration, and commitment to serving individuals most in need of literacy services -- are summarized in the form of a checklist attached to this report. Local programs are required to use the funds for adult education, family, workplace, ESL, and/or prison literacy services.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Workforce Investment Act* defines the entity that receives and distributes the money -- referred to in this Policy Update as the "state agency" -- as the entity in the state that is responsible for administering and supervising adult education and literacy policy. In most states, it is either the state department of education or the community college system. (For information on the eligible agency in your state, see the [Directory of National and State Literacy Contacts](#), available at [www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov) or by calling 1-800-228-8813.)

### *Organizations Eligible for Funding*

The organizations listed below are eligible to apply to their state agency for federal funds. For information on how to apply in your state, contact your state director of adult education<sup>2</sup>.

- Local education agencies
- Community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness
- Volunteer literacy organizations of demonstrated effectiveness
- Institutions of higher education
- Public or private nonprofit agencies
- Libraries
- Public housing authorities
- Consortiums of organizations listed above
- Other nonprofits that have the ability to provide literacy services

### *Direct and Equitable Access*

Like the *Adult Education Act*, the *Workforce Investment Act* requires state agencies to give all of the eligible providers listed above an equal (i.e. “direct and equitable”) opportunity to apply for the funds. The law goes on to require state agencies to ensure that the same grant/contract announcement and application processes are used for all eligible providers. It also requires state agencies to describe what steps they will take to ensure that the direct and equitable access provisions are carried out in the plans they submit to the Secretary of Education.

### *Literacy for Prisoners*

The *Workforce Investment Act* repeals the prison literacy program, which in recent years has received \$4.7 million annually. Under the *Adult Education Act*, states were required to use a minimum of 10 percent of their Adult Education State Grant for corrections education. The *Workforce Investment Act* allows states to use a maximum of 10 percent for this purpose.

### **State Leadership Activities**

In addition to the grants to local providers, the law allows state agencies to use 12.5 percent of federal Adult Education State Grant funding to build local program capacity. States are encouraged to collaborate when possible, and can use funds for one or more of the following activities:

- Professional development programs that improve the quality of instruction

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<sup>2</sup> For information on how to contact the director of adult education in your state, see the *Directory of National and State Literacy Contacts*, available at [www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov) or by calling 1-800-228-8813.

- Evaluating the quality of services
- Technical assistance to adult education and literacy programs
- Technology assistance, including staff training in use of technology
- Supporting state or regional literacy resource centers
- Incentives for program coordination, integration, and for performance
- Developing and disseminating curricula
- Coordinating with support services, such as child care and transportation
- Integrating literacy instruction and occupational training, including promoting linkage with employers
- Establishing linkages with postsecondary educational institutions, including community colleges
- Other statewide activities that support adult education and literacy

### **New Accountability System**

One of the most important features of the *Workforce Investment Act* is the new comprehensive performance accountability system that it establishes. This new accountability system is designed to assess states' effectiveness in achieving continuous improvement of adult education and literacy activities funded by the federal government. The law lists specific performance measures by which states will be assessed. These include the following:

1. Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking in the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition and other literacy skills.
2. Placement, retention, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment, or career advancement.
3. Receipt of a high school diploma or its equivalent.
4. Other objective, quantifiable measures, as identified by the state agency. (Local providers can have input into the process of identifying other performance measures.)

Each state agency will negotiate with the Secretary of Education in setting expected levels of performance, and is required to submit an annual report on its progress. The Secretary of Education, in turn, will make the report available to the public and distribute it to Congress. Congress is likely to use this information in future funding decisions.

### **State Plan**

Each state agency that applies for federal funds through this law is required to submit a 5-year plan for improving adult education and family literacy activities in the state. As they develop the plan, state agencies are expected to consult with literacy providers in the state. Plans are due to the Secretary of Education by April 1, 1999. In many states, planning is already underway under the leadership of the state director of adult education.

Each 5-year plan is required to include specific goals for the next three years, and will be evaluated on how well it meets these goals. In developing the plan, the state must include a description of the process that will be used for public participation and comment. The state agency must submit the plan to the Governor for review and comment before submitting it to the Secretary of Education.

The plan must include an objective assessment of the literacy needs of individuals in the state. In addition, it must include a description of each of the following:

- The adult education and family literacy activities that will be carried out with federal funds.
- How the state agency will evaluate the effectiveness of adult education and literacy activities (based on the performance measures).
- How the performance measures will ensure the improvement of adult education and literacy activities in the state.
- The process that will be used for public participation and comment on the plan.
- How the state agency will develop strategies to better serve low-income students, individuals with disabilities, single parents, displaced homemakers, individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement (including those with limited English proficiency).
- How adult education and literacy activities will be integrated with career development, employment and training, and other activities.
- Steps the state will take to ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access through every step of the grant application process.

### **National Leadership Activities**

The law reauthorizes both the National Institute for Literacy and the U.S. Department of Education's national leadership activities for five years.

#### *National Institute for Literacy*

The law directs the National Institute for Literacy to continue its efforts to strengthen the capacity of the literacy field through a variety of activities, including the following:

- Establishing a national electronic database (i.e. LINCS) that disseminates information to the broadest possible audience within the literacy field and includes a communication network (i.e. listservs) for literacy programs, providers, social service agencies, and students.
- Advising Congress and federal departments and agencies regarding development of policy with respect to literacy and basic skills.
- Providing policy and technical assistance to federal, state, and local entities for the improvement of policy and programs relating to literacy.

- Encouraging federal agencies to support literacy efforts.
- Helping establish a reliable and replicable literacy research agenda.

### *Department of Education*

The law directs the Secretary of Education to ensure that the Department of Education continues to carry out its national literacy activities, including the following:

- Providing technical assistance to eligible providers in developing and using performance measures listed in this law.
- Providing technical assistance for professional development activities, and to develop, improve, identify, and disseminate the most successful methods and techniques for providing adult education and literacy services.
- Carrying out research, such as estimating the number of adults functioning at the lowest levels of literacy proficiency.
- Developing and replicating model programs, particularly those working with the learning disabled, ESL, and workplace populations.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For a copy of the *Workforce Investment Act*, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov> or call the House Document Room at 202-226-5200 and ask for Public Law 105-220.

For a more detailed summary of the legislation, see <http://www.naepdc.org>.

To be added to the mailing list for future *Policy Updates*, see <http://www.nifl.gov> or call 202-632-1500 and choose option #1.

*Special thanks to Jim Bowling for his assistance with this Policy Update.*

## **Checklist for Programs Seeking Federal Adult Education and Literacy Grants**

The following list is designed to help programs generally assess how well they are meeting criteria that the Workforce Investment Act requires state agencies to consider in awarding grants. This list is not all-inclusive, and programs considering applying for these grants should contact their state director of adult education for more specific information about grant requirements. *(For information on how to contact the director of adult education in your state, see the Directory of National and State Literacy Contacts, available at [www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov) or by calling 1-800-228-8813.)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ To what degree has your program established measurable goals for participant outcomes?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Can your program demonstrate its past effectiveness in improving the literacy skills of adults and families?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ What is the level of commitment of your program to serving individuals most in need of literacy services?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Is your program of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains?
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Are educational activities built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Do activities use computers and other advances in technology, as appropriate?
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Do students in your program have an opportunity to learn in "real life" contexts?
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Is your program staffed by well-trained instructors, administrators, and counselors?
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Does your program offer flexible schedules and support services (such as child care and transportation)?
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Does your program coordinate its activities with other available resources in the community, including postsecondary schools, elementary and secondary schools. One-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies?

# NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY *Policy Update*



REPORT FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

## *President Proposes Major Funding Increases for Literacy*

*- February 1, 1999 -*

The President today unveiled an adult and family literacy package that would assist programs in improving quality and serving more of the tens of millions of adults and other family members who need to improve their basic skills.

State education agencies (SEA's) would receive an increase of 28 percent for adult education state grants, bringing the total to nearly half a billion dollars -- the largest amount ever for this program. SEA's pass on most of this funding to local programs through competitive grants for adult education, family literacy, and ESL (English as a Second Language) activities. The Department of Education would receive \$70 million for a new ESL demonstration program that would focus on young adult immigrants who have little formal education.

Related increases include the following:

- Increasing the Bilingual Educational Professional Development program from \$50 million to \$75 million in order to address the critical national shortage of well-prepared ESL and bilingual teachers.
- \$240 million for the new GEAR UP program, which helps disadvantaged students plan for college -- through mentoring, tutoring, and career counseling. While it is targeted to middle-school students in high-poverty schools, Congress may expand it to include adult learners.
- Increasing the Pell grant maximum by \$125 to \$3,250 per student per year. Pell grants may be used by dislocated workers, GED graduates, and other working adults in part-time programs that lead to a degree. HOPE scholarships and the Lifetime Learning tax credits can also help low-income adults continue their education beyond a high school diploma or GED.
- \$65 million for the Community-based Technology Centers program, which brings technology to community centers (including community-based literacy programs),

libraries, and public housing in order to help community residents gain technology skills and take courses on-line.

- \$50 million for a new Special Education Primary Education Intervention program, which helps school districts provide early intervention to children age 5-9 who have marked problems learning to read and may be learning disabled.
- \$2 million for a new High Skills Communities Award that would recognize and provide an annual financial award to up to 10 communities that have achieved concrete results in improving the literacy and workforce skills of their adults.

The chart below shows next year's funding levels as compared to recent years.

| <b>Literacy Program</b>                | <b>FY00<br/>proposal</b> | <b>FY99<br/>&lt;===== actual funding =====&gt;</b> | <b>FY98</b> | <b>FY97</b> |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Adult Education State Grants</b>    | <b>468</b>               | <b>365</b>                                         | <b>345</b>  | <b>340</b>  |
| Reading Excellence Act                 | 286                      | 260                                                | N/A         | N/A         |
| <b>Even Start Family Literacy</b>      | <b>145</b>               | <b>135</b>                                         | <b>124</b>  | <b>102</b>  |
| National Programs/ESL Initiative       | 101                      | 14                                                 | 5           | 5           |
| <b>National Institute for Literacy</b> | <b>11<sup>1</sup></b>    | <b>11</b>                                          | <b>5.5</b>  | <b>4.5</b>  |
| Prison Literacy                        | 0                        | 4.7 <sup>2</sup>                                   | 4.7         | 4.7         |

<sup>1</sup> This includes \$5 million for dissemination activities related to the Reading Excellence Act.

<sup>2</sup> In FY99, this program was moved to the Youthful Offenders program in the Higher Education Act, but continues to be administered by the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education.



## ***President Proposes Major New Adult Education and Family Literacy Initiative***

*- January 28, 1999 -*

The President today announced a major new adult education and family literacy initiative that is included in the FY2000 budget he will submit to Congress next week. It is part of a larger White House effort to educate and train American workers for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs.

"The goal of the Adult Literacy initiative," according to a White House statement, "is to bring Presidential leadership and focus to a pressing national problem by demanding improvements in the quality of adult basic education programs and increasing funding to help States both meet the new quality goals [in the Workforce Investment Act] and serve more people."

The initiative includes the following:

- **Increasing adult education state grant funding next year by 28 percent (\$103 million) to \$468 million.**

The increase would be used to help the nation achieve the following four goals by the year 2005:

1. Increasing the number of full-time teachers by 20 percent;
2. Doubling the number of instructional hours per student;
3. Tripling the number of computer stations available at adult education centers;
4. More than doubling the amount of child care and counseling services offered by adult education programs.

- **Creating a \$70 million "Common Ground" English Literacy/Civics Initiative.**

This new initiative would provide competitive grants to states and communities affected by immigration to expand access to high-quality English language instruction, linked to practical instruction in civics and life skills.

- **Creating a \$23 million "America Learns" Technology Initiative.**

This new initiative would award grants to States working with private-sector partners to increase adult learners' access to technology. The initiative would incorporate technology into instruction, starting with pilot projects in 40 communities.

- **Launching a new "High Skills Communities" Campaign.**

This campaign will mobilize States and local communities to develop strategies and measure progress towards improving literacy and lifelong learning. This would include assessing whether or not individuals have the literacy skills needed for jobs available in that community. Up to 10 communities will receive awards of \$50,000 annually for achieving concrete results.

- **Creating a new 10 percent Workplace Education Tax Credit.**

Employers who provide certain workplace literacy, English language instruction, and basic education programs would be allowed a 10 percent income tax credit for eligible educational expenses, with a maximum credit of \$525 per participating employee per year.

In order for these new proposals to become law, Congress must agree to them, and provide the funding. Initial reaction from Congress was favorable. Rep. Bill Goodling, Republican chair of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, said, "These proposals have merit. I hope the White House will quickly shape these proposals into legislation as soon as possible and move them to Congress for consideration. We will spar on a variety of education issues this year but not these. What the President is talking about today should enjoy broad bipartisan support."

For more information, go to the following websites:

- [www.whitehouse.gov/WH/New/Budget2000/summary.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/New/Budget2000/summary.html)
- [www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/Budget00/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/Budget00/)