# ADULT EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE

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# Contents

# The Principal as Instructional Leader

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CALPRO

> *"The job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of the people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result."*
>
> \- Richard Elmore (2000)

Leadership in adult education is constantly evolving to meet the demands of a new age. Emerging technologies, an increasingly diverse adult learner population, demands for increased program accountability, the pressures of a rapidly changing workplace, budgetary fluxes, and world events all contribute to the changing face of leadership. In particular, the roles of principals, directors, and other administrative leaders are expanding to include greater focus on teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making, and accountability (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

So how do we recognize and characterize the effective instructional leader? Following are typical performance goals of effective instructional leaders.

### 1. *Shape the Instructional Environment*

Today's adult education leaders are not just effective managers; they are also quality instructional leaders who *shape the environment in which teachers and students succeed or fail*. As such, they must be able not only to perform the "ritualistic tasks of organizing, budgeting, managing, and dealing with disruptions inside and outside the system" (Ellmore, 2000), but also to coach and *encourage the professional growth of their teachers*. In particular, they

- focus on instructional quality, spending time in classrooms, observing teaching and helping teachers both improve their practice and make student achievement the highest priority;
- challenge staff members to examine traditional assumptions about teaching;
- provide professional development opportunities for staff in which teachers learn to assist all students in reaching high standards;
- make available to teachers the latest information about research-based practices;
- establish support networks for teachers, in which staff can share information, address problems, and work together to plan curricula and instruction that are tied to student learning goals;
- encourage the building of small learning communities in which teachers participate in regular, collaborative professional learning experiences aimed at improving teaching and learning;
- make time for teacher leaders to facilitate, plan, mentor, and coach other teachers on the team;
- provide time for teacher reflection as an important part of improving practice;

- offer incentives that encourage teacher leadership, including released time, job restructuring, greater flexibility in the use of resources; and
- recognize the need for improving the administrator's own professional practice.

**2. *Use data to inform decisions***

Effective leaders

- place student learning at the center of all decisions;
- understand the importance of, and ensure, clean data collection so that they have confidence in what their data tell them;
- ensure that their schools/agencies collect and use data from a variety of sources to measure performance;
- analyze data using a variety of strategies;
- share student test score results and other indicators of student learning with teachers to help them focus attention where it is most needed;
- use data as tools to identify barriers to success and to plan for program improvement;
- encourage among staff a culture that is comfortable with, values, and uses data to support decisions about program improvements.

**3. *Assume a Style of Distributed Leadership***

Quality leadership means that formal leaders distribute leadership responsibilities among various role groups in the organization while they work hard at "creating a common culture, or set of values, symbols, and rituals" (Elmore, 2000). Different from the traditional top-down, authoritative model of leadership, distributed leadership resides with the whole community, not just with those who hold formal positions of authority. In addition, studies of schools in the Midwest found that "teachers appear substantially more willing to participate in all areas of decision making if they perceive their relationship with their principals as more open, collaborative, facilitative, and supportive" (Smylie, 1992, p. 63). Leaders must be skilled communicators who can guide staff and *build learning communities among their staff members.* Research indicates that schools that function as learning communities produce higher levels of student learning (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Leaders also must use their communication skills to *engage stakeholders in the broader community in creating and achieving a shared vision for their schools/agencies.* Those with a stake in the school should have an opportunity to share in the decisions that affect them.

> *"Leadership is about learning together, and constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively. It involves opportunities to surface and mediate perceptions, values, beliefs, information, and assumptions through continuing conversations; to inquire about and generate ideas together; to seek to reflect upon and make sense of work in the light of shared beliefs and new information; and to create actions that grow out of these new understandings. Such is the core of leadership."*
>
> -Linda Lambert (1998)

### 4. *Function as Change Agent*

Finally, effective leaders are *change agents* with a focus on improving instructional delivery and, ultimately, student learning. Leaders are key to large-scale sustainable education reform and must be instructional leaders if they are to be the effective leaders needed for sustained innovation. If they are to lead a continuous improvement process resulting in student learning gains, they must understand curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In essence, they

- understand the change process and how to build support for change;
- know how to plan for, facilitate, and sustain change;
- involve all stakeholders in planning for change;
- provide the resources and support necessary to effect change and make creative use of <u>all</u> resources—people, time, and money—to support the change efforts;
- appreciate the "implementation dip" that inevitably occurs, no matter how well they have planned for change;
- welcome resistance as a means of defining important issues/concerns and look for ways to address those concerns.
- understand that "reculturing is the name of the game" (Fullen, 2002). There is no short-cut to sustained reform—it involves hard day-to-day work. Fullen (2001) points out that transforming culture (i.e., changing what people in the organization value and how they work together to accomplish it) is what leads to deep, lasting change.

> "*School leaders must learn how to introduce a continuous improvement process… Principals' professional development should include deep knowledge of individual and organizational change processes and effective staff development strategies. Additionally, administrators should learn how to use data in planning for continuous improvement*."
>
> - National Staff Development Council (2000).

Quality leadership means sharing authority and responsibility, establishing a culture that supports high achievement, and continuously using information about student performance to guide improvements and hold individuals and groups accountable for their work.

When quality leadership exists, it becomes "an integral, almost invisible, part of how a school community works, lives, and learns together. The presence of authentic instructional leadership can be witnessed in the everyday acts of people who take responsibility for improving teaching and learning in the entire school community, and its effectiveness will be revealed in a variety of measures of student achievement" (King, 2002).

> *"If we could do only one thing to build school capacity, we would develop a cadre of leaders who understand the challenges of school improvement, relish academic achievement, and rally all stakeholders to higher standards of learning."*
>
> - Consortium on Renewing Education (1998, p. 35)

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# CASAS/TOPSpro

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## Overview

Under the auspices of the California Department of Education (CDE), a consortium of California agencies established the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). This system provides standardized assessment tools that measure reading, math and English language skills. CASAS tests measure the basic skills in contexts adults typically encounter in everyday situations. CDE has used the CASAS system for more than 27 years to compile a comprehensive, statewide database of demographic and goal-attainment information on adult learners. The system also enhances accountability efforts within and among adult education programs in California by assisting agencies in meeting program-improvement goals on a long-term basis, which is required by the State plan.

CASAS is a nationally and internationally recognized system for assessing adult basic reading, math, listening, writing, and speaking skills within a functional context; it is approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor to assess both native and non-native speakers of English. Backed by 27 years of research and development in adult assessment, instruction, and evaluation, CASAS provides programs with the resources and expertise to establish a comprehensive performance accountability system, address core indicators of performance, integrate literacy and occupational skill instruction, and evaluate the effectiveness of adult education and literacy programs. CASAS assessment, training, and evaluation are based on the critical competencies and skill areas required for success in the workplace, community, and family. With the implementation of the CASAS system, programs can establish measurable goals, document learner outcomes, and report program impact to students, staff, local boards, and policy makers. When developing new assessment, training, and evaluation components for the CASAS system, the consortium relies on extensive input from adult education providers, employment and training professionals, and representatives from business and industry.

## TOPSpro Software Overview

The California Department of Education uses the CASAS TOPSpro software system to meet the National Reporting System (NRS) federal reporting requirements for WIA II funded programs. In addition, all adult schools must fully implement the TOPSpro data collection system for all program areas funded through California state apportionment. All agencies that receive Federal WIA Title II funds also must implement the TOPSpro software system as a funding requirement.

TOPSpro provides accountability information to students, teachers, administrators, and state and federal decision-makers. It offers agencies the options to track information on individual students, specific classes, selected program areas, and selected program sites, and to aggregate information agency-wide. It allows agencies to track a broad range of information, including demographic data, student learning gains, student goals, and student outcomes.

TOPSpro easily tracks longitudinal student progress according to reading, math and/or listening achievement, test scores, and goal attainment, and it can accurately track students enrolled in multiple programs within an agency. Finally, TOPSpro quickly generates most of the tables required by the U.S. Department of Education.

### For More Information

The following resources describe reporting requirements for adult education programs that are supported by state and federal funds. "WIA/AEFLA" refers to the federal "Workforce Investment Act / Adult Education and Family Literacy Act."

1. Administration Manual for California for WIA Title II Agencies, EL Civics, and Adult Schools. This manual provides instructions and guidelines to California Adult Schools and other WIA/AEFLA-funded agencies for meeting state and federal data collection requirements in current program year. The California State Department of Education (CDE) has developed these guidelines and instructions to ensure that all programs meet their data collection and accountability mandates. CASAS updates this administration manual each fiscal year. To request an electronic copy of the manual send, an E-mail to the CASAS California Accountability Program Manager at capm@casas.org, or call 800-255-1036.

2. California State Plan, 1999-2004, Extended through 6/30/07. This document serves as an agreement between the State and Federal Governments to meet the mandates of WIA/AEFLA Title II. This agreement specifies that federal funds made available for adult education and literacy activities shall supplement, and not supplant, other State or local public funds expended for adult education and literacy activities. The State Plan details the administration requirements, assurances, evaluation requirements, performance measures, procedures and process of funding, and eligibility requirements for local providers to meet the State plan. Download a copy from the CDE Web site at http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ae/ir/documents/stateplan.doc

3. CDE Adult Education Office: Accountability Requirements. This document outlines the current program year CDE requirements, as directed by federal and state laws, for adult education programs to collect and report statewide accountability data to meet the mandates of WIA/AEFLA Title II and the California State Plan. The document identifies the statewide report system and the data collection items required by four public mandates. Download a copy from the CDE Web site at http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ae/fg/requirements.asp

4. EL Civics: Background and Funding Information. This web site provides links to documents that describe various aspects of the English Literacy and Civics (EL Civics) program, including its legislative history, funding information, and a list of funded agencies. See: http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ae/fg/

The following provide information for ordering and using a variety of components in the CASAS and TOPSpro systems:

1. California Accountability. This area of the CASAS Web site contains information about specific topics related to California Accountability, including TOPSpro software, data collection guidelines, training and networking resources, database and research reports, and assessment. For more information, go to www.casas.org >>Virtual Communities >> California Accountability.

2. English Literacy and Civics (EL Civics). This area of the CASAS Web site contains information about specific topics related to English Literacy and Civics Education, including resources for Civic Participation and Citizenship Preparation. For more information, go to www.casas.org >> Highlights California EL Civics Web Site.

3. Guides for WIA 225/231 and English Literacy and Civics Education Agencies. These ordering guides list the CASAS test forms and TOPSpro answer sheets federally funded agencies in California require. Go to www.casas.org » Virtual Community » CA Accountability to download copies of the guides. For more information about these guides, contact CASAS at 1-800-255-1036, Customer Service.

4. CASAS Test Administration Manuals. Test Administration Manuals are available for all CASAS test series. These manuals provide instructions for test administration and scoring, data collection, and interpretation of results. The manuals also include information on curriculum planning and instruction, CASAS skill-level descriptors, testing accommodations, and student and class report forms. Test Administration Manuals are automatically included in each order.

5. CASAS QuickSearch™. This software provides an essential link between assessment and instruction in the CASAS system. Quick Search – updated annually – provides information on more than 2,000 commercially available texts, audio, video, software programs, and learning systems. Quick Search helps educators in choosing instructional materials according to subject matter, level, and program focus. For more information, go to the CASAS home page, www.casas.org, >> About CASAS >> Instructional Resources. CASAS provides one complimentary copy of QuickSearch to each funded agency. Place your order through the Ordering Guides for WIA 225/231 and English Literacy and Civics Education Agencies.

6. California and TOPSpro Forums. CASAS provides several forums on special topics of interest to adult education agencies. The "California Forum" provides a question-and-answer threaded discussion on topics of general interest to California adult education agencies. The "TOPSpro Forum" provides a question-and-answer threaded discussion concerning TOPSpro software, TOPSpro training, and accountability issues. Browse these forums by choosing the "Forum" button from the CASAS home page, www.casas.org.

# Improving Benchmarks through Clean Data Collection

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## Introduction

Federal and state laws mandate that adult schools in California collect and report specific accountability data for their programs. Guidelines for collection and use of these data are included in:

1. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Sections 225 and 231 (Public Law 105-220);
2. The National Reporting System (NRS);
3. The California Budget Act; and
4. The California State Plan 1999-2004.

Data and accountability mandates apply to students in the following programs:

1. Students in adult schools in all authorized program areas i.e., Adult Basic Education (ABE), High School/GED, English as a Second Language (ESL), Citizenship, Adults with Disabilities, Vocational Education, Parent Education, Older Adults, Health and Safety, and Home Economics.
2. CalWORKs-eligible students.
3. Vocational students meeting the requirements of the Performance Based Accountability (PBA) system, and
4. Eligible students in WIA/AEFLA 225 and 231 funded agencies.

Fortunately, one set of data collected on a student can be used to fulfill multiple state and federal accountability requirements. Program staff must gather demographic, program, and progress information on all students, regardless of the programs in which they are enrolled. All this information can be gathered by using the Tracking of Programs and Students (TOPSpro) Entry Record and Update Record. Entry records are required for all students in all programs. Update records are required for all students who complete entry records and remain for 12 hours of instruction.

Program staff can also use TOPSpro to gather data to meet the CalWORKs and PBA requirements. Data collection requirements include the Entry Record, the Update Record, and the Workforce Supplemental Entry and Update Records. In addition, agencies can use TOPSpro to collect test data for WIA/AEFLA 225/231-funded agencies.

TOPSpro software, TOPSpro Entry and Update Record forms, Workforce Supplemental Entry and Update Record forms, and specified assessment materials all are available at no cost to adult schools and other agencies that are funded through the federal and state laws listed in the introductory section of this article. Adult schools and WIA Title II-funded agencies receive from CASAS all software, software revisions, and form revisions free of charge. For information on CASAS, TOPSpro, ordering materials, or technical assistance, contact the CASAS California Accountability Program (capm@casas.org).

Adult schools, 225/231-funded agencies, and agencies receiving funding through the EL Civics (English Literacy and Civics) program must send/export their TOPSpro data to CASAS on an annual basis. CASAS then aggregates the data to meet all of CDE's accountability mandates from the federal government. Since 1998, adult schools have worked to perfect their Management Information systems (MIS) and put processes in place to meet the data collection mandates. Administrators can improve the efficiency of these accountability systems by adhering to the guidelines, as described below.[1]

**General**

- Take ownership of the system. The administrator who supervises the data collection must fully understand all the processes and technical details involved in the collection of "clean," reliable data. Understand the purposes of the CASAS tests that you use, and understand the capabilities and limitations of TOPSpro databases.

- Provide adequate support staff. For most agencies, it is a wise investment to hire someone whose sole responsibilities are TOPSpro management, supporting staff in data collection, and data reporting.

- Invest in the reliable, efficient equipment needed for data gathering.

- Use available resources (e.g., CASAS technical support, CDE consultants, state and area conferences).

- Provide professional development for your staff—for both teachers and support staff—in the TOPSpro and CASAS systems. Develop simple systems that everyone understands.

- Remain focused on adult learners and their needs. Apply the lessons learned from data collection to improving the quality of program services, curricula, and instructional practices.

- Give teachers feedback both about their students' goal attainment and performance data. If the teacher sees nothing from all of the data that is gathered, there will be no incentive for the data gathering to continue. Encourage teachers to use data to guide the improvement of their instruction, thereby making their efforts at data collection meaningful to them.

- Collect complete data on all learners. Don't try to short-cut the system; it will only cause trouble in the long run. If your program has established processes to guarantee that it collects complete entry and update records on every student in every class, CASAS will be able to extract required data.

- Be careful when you scan your program's data records:

    - Ensure that your scanner model settings are configured properly.

    - Review records for data accuracy and completeness before scanning. If data are incomplete, return the forms to the teacher for correction. If teachers are not made aware of errors, then errors will continue.

  - After scanning, immediately repair any errors using batch repair and enter student names using batch name entry.

  - Verify data by printing appropriate reports from the information scanned and immediately correct data entry errors.

- Revalidate your database every two weeks.

**Collecting Accurate Data**

- Understand the CASAS and TOPSpro systems.

  - Keep up-to-date with TOPSpro. Attend with staff all available TOPSpro workshops. Inquire whether there is a regional network of TOPSpro users in your area. If there is, join it. If not, work with others to form one.

  - Become familiar with all TOPSpro and CASAS forms and how to use them, i.e., TOPSpro Entry and Update Records, Workforce Supplemental Entry and Update Records, and CASAS Test Record Forms. (Detailed explanations of these forms are included in the *Administration Manual for California*, published by CASAS.)

  - Become familiar with all the reports available in TOPSpro. These reports will help you monitor and clean your data. They also can provide information to help you make programmatic decisions with confidence. For example, TOPSpro reports can help you compare the demographics of different school sites, or compare student retention and learning gains between programs of different lengths and intensities.

  - Distribute reports to other program administrators in your agency on a regular basis. Encourage them to monitor benchmarks and understand enrollment trends. Encourage all school leadership to draw conclusions from these reports concerning quality of instruction, value to students, student outcomes, student learning, and goal attainment.

- Use time-savers that help ensure accurate data collection (i.e., strategies that reduce the time required of teachers to “bubble in” the TOPSpro forms).

  - Use an attendance system that is compatible with TOPSpro so that you can import student name, ID, and demographic data to TOPSpro, and then “pre-slug” that information onto TOPSpro Entry Record forms before giving to students to complete.

  - Re-format your program’s registration forms to include the demographic data needed on entry records.

  - Use TOPSpro override scanning. Identify the data fields that your agency can enter automatically (such as class ID) for all students in a class or program. The override scanning feature will automatically enter this type of information, thereby saving the time and effort required to “bubble in” those fields. Inform teachers that they and their students may leave those specific fields blank on Entry and Update records.

- Visit the CASAS website (www.casas.org) to obtain translations of TOPSpro forms in other languages.
- Train teachers, train teachers, train teachers.
  - Provide professional development workshops to help teachers accurately and efficiently complete TOPSpro Entry and Update Records whenever students enter, drop, transfer, or complete a course.
  - Establish regular TOPSpro procedures that become as automatic as submitting attendance data.
  - Help teachers develop strategies to orient students to the format of the TOPSpro data collection forms.
  - Help teachers develop strategies to gather update data from students, especially from students who exit the program before the end of the term.
  - Regularly compare attendance rosters with TOPSpro rosters for each class and inform teachers when there are discrepancies (monthly is ideal). All dropped students need to have update records, and all new students need to have entry records.
- Provide feedback to teachers on a regular basis.
  - Produce and distribute reports to teachers each time you require a major data collection effort from them. If teachers continually submit forms but never see data reports, they will see no value in the data collection process and will come to resent the process as an intrusion in their teaching time.
  - Provide professional development workshops on ways in which teachers can use demographic and assessment data to improve their instruction. For example, different TOPSpro reports can help teachers determine the following: whether they are providing instruction at the appropriate levels of difficulty for their students, whether they are contextualizing their instruction in ways that are appropriate to their students' goals, and whether they are emphasizing the instructional competencies that their students need most.

**Improving Benchmark Attainment**

- The single, most significant, factor that improves benchmark attainment is professional development of staff. All staff (clerical, instructional, support, and administrative) must understand what data your program collects, why your program collects these data, what benchmarks are, and what the relationship is between benchmarks and funding. Be sure that your TOPSpro clerical staff members understand the four Core Performance Indicators, also known as the four benchmark categories. Core Performance Indicators are explained in depth in the *Administration Manual for California*, published annually by CASAS. In brief, they are:

- Significant Learning Gains: A five-point or greater CASAS scaled-score gain at posttest for students with a pretest score of 210 or below, or a three-point gain at posttest for students with a pretest score of 211 or higher.

- Two-Level Advancement: A student's posttest score indicates that the learner has completed two benchmark levels, as defined in the chart entitled, "California Benchmarks with NRS and CASAS Level Names." This chart is included as page 5-5 of the *2002-2003 Administration Manual for California*, as published by CASAS.

- GED: A student successfully completes **all** sections of the GED Tests.

- High School Diploma: A student receives a high school diploma.

➢ Consider whether to expand or contract certain programs, based on how readily they might earn benchmark funding. The CDE provides supplemental benchmark funding, as available, according to the priorities set out in the California State Plan 1999-2004.

➢ To obtain benchmarks, the data on each student must be complete. There must be an Entry Record with complete information, an Update Record with complete information, a Pretest Record, and a Posttest Record that indicates progress. If any of the required information is missing on any of these four records from a student, there will be no benchmark.

➢ Probably the single most important data element collected is the student identification number. *This field is critical!* Students must use one unique number consistently on all forms. It can be the student's social security number, but it may also be an agency-assigned number. The student identification number links all information in TOPSpro. For students who are GED candidates, make certain that this number is identical to the number submitted to the CDE GED office. This is the only way that a data match will be achieved.

➢ Provide instruction before asking learners to indicate their primary and secondary goals for a class. Ensure that learners indicate goals that they hope to attain within **this** program year. For example, when a student enters the program to obtain a GED, but the student's current skill levels indicate that it will take more than a year to attain this goal, the teacher should encourage the student to indicate a goal such as "to improve basic skills" or a similar goal that is attainable within the program year.

➢ Test all students in your 225/231-funded program. Pretest and posttest results are required to document benchmark attainment of "significant gain" and "completing two levels."

- Each agency is free to choose when to conduct testing during the school year. Establish a regular testing schedule that best meets your needs. Be sure to consider student attendance patterns. For example, if your data from previous years indicate that student attendance drops significantly during the last two weeks of the spring semester, then you might decide to conduct posttesting prior to the last two weeks of classes. To document continuous program improvement, testing generally should be conducted near the end of each semester, but not necessarily during the last two weeks of class.

- o Pretest students within one or two weeks of enrollment but be careful not to pretest too soon. Some students may find pretesting intimidating and they may drop out.
- o Establish a logical duration between pretest and posttest. Alternatives to consider include:
  - At beginning and end of each quarter;
  - After the students attains 80 to 100 hours of instruction;
  - Before holiday breaks;
  - As soon as each student is ready to move up to the next level or to leave the program.

▪ If a student is enrolled in several classes and has several pretests and posttests, the pretest pair with the lowest pretest score will automatically be used for benchmark attainment. For example, for a student who shows a reading pretest score of 185 and a math pretest score of 190, the reading paired scores automatically will be measured for benchmark attainment. For students studying multiple subjects, determine the subject in which the student seems most likely to make the quickest progress. Test the student in that subject.

▪ Know the various CASAS assessment tools that are available. Be strategic and choose tests that correlate with your curricula. For example, teachers of Vocational ABE or Vocational ESL should use the CASAS Employability Competency Survey series of assessment instruments rather than the Life Skills series.

➢ Teach students prerequisite skills for test taking, which should include not only test-taking skills, but also reading skills, thinking skills, and vocabulary. Involve students in measuring their own progress. Help students understand that the purpose of the CASAS test is to help teachers improve their instruction. Help students understand that CASAS is designed in such a way that a "good" test score is one that shows a student has missed about half of the test items. If a student gets too many items correct, the test has failed, and the student needs to take a harder test.

➢ Know the test content and make sure your teachers include appropriate material in their classes.

▪ Include core test competencies as curriculum objectives.

▪ Return pretest results to teachers immediately so that they can design their instruction around competencies that their students find difficult. Many publishers now explicitly correlate CASAS competencies with the scope and sequence of ABE/ESL textbooks. Acquire such materials for your programs and support teachers in using them.

- Make sure you use the test that will yield the best results—don't give tests out of order and avoid giving students tests that are the wrong level.
  - Use a placement test to ensure proper class placement and to select the appropriate pretest.
  - Use the proper sequence of tests. Testing out of sequence will invalidate a potential benchmark.
  - Use pretest information to select the best posttest for each student. Don't just guess. Use TOPSpro to predict the next best test.
- Monitor benchmarks on a regular basis using the benchmark monitoring report in TOPSpro. This report permits the user to view, at all *potential* benchmarks, whether or not they actually can be claimed. The report identified all required information that is missing from each potential benchmark data set, missing information that prevents earned benchmarks from being claimed. Regular monitoring will enable staff to know how they are doing on a regular basis and will permit necessary intervention by the administrator, if necessary.

## Conclusion

The bottom line for each administrator is that the accuracy and integrity of the data are the administrator's responsibility. We are obligated to do all we can to collect data that can help accurately describe our programs and improve our program services. It is only with such data that we can influence legislation and control our own destinies.

**Footnotes**

[1]Agencies can locate detailed information on accountability in the *Administration Manual for California*, which is published annually by CASAS. Agencies receive this manual upon staff's completion of appropriate training in accountability procedures. For more information, contact the CASAS California Accountability Program (capm@casas.org).

# Fiscal Management Resources

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## Introduction

The purpose of this section is to help adult education administrators become effective fiscal managers. Included are materials necessary for the accurate and timely filing of required forms. The section is organized into six topics. Users may refer only to those topics for which they need information.

## Terms

1. Average Daily Attendance
2. Student Attendance
3. Attendance of Concurrently Enrolled High School Students
4. Revenue Limit
5. Cap
6. Payment of State Apportionment

**Average Daily Attendance (a.d.a.)**

An earned unit of a.d.a. consists of 525 hours of eligible student attendance generated in approved classes between the period of July 1 and June 30, the state fiscal year. One a.d.a. equals 525 hours of student attendance during the school year. To calculate a.d.a., divide the total number of hours of student attendance by 525; for example, 15,750 hours of student attendance divided by 525 equals 30 a.d.a.

The number of a.d.a. that each district reports to the California Department of Education (CDE) for its adult education program determines the amount of state funding that the CDE provides to the district. The funding comes from the state annual Budget Act. Adult education funding is subject to the district cap on a.d.a.

## 2. Student Attendance

For a student's attendance to qualify for state apportionment, the student must engage in educational activities under the immediate supervision of a district or county employee who possesses a valid teaching certificate, registered as required by law.

To calculate a.d.a., districts must count the hours of attendance of enrolled adult students in the authorized subject areas. Only actual hours of attendance in class are counted toward student attendance; excused absences are <u>not</u> counted. Except where prohibited, districts may credit a student with the entire hour of attendance when the student is present for any part of a scheduled hour.

For class sessions that are scheduled for more or less than an exact hour or multiples of an hour, the reported hours of attendance must reflect the exact length of the class; this figure may <u>not</u> be rounded up to the next highest hour. A.d.a. is generated by student attendance occurring during regularly scheduled class times. Districts may not claim scheduled class break times for a.d.a. When classes are offered in a laboratory setting, the district must keep individual student records of actual attendance *in minutes*, which must then be converted to hours. Laboratory classes do not allow for the rounding of attendance to full hours of attendance.

There are 10 authorized subject areas in which classes may be offered: adult basic education, adult secondary education, English as a second language, citizenship, vocational education, adults with disabilities, older adults, parenting, health and safety, and home economics. In five of the authorized areas (adult basic education, adult secondary education, English as a second language, citizenship, and vocational education), districts may claim more than 15 hours of attendance per student per week for a.d.a., up to the actual attendance hours. Under certain circumstances, districts may also claim more than 15 hours for classes for adults with disabilities.

In some authorized areas, there are limitations on a.d.a. Districts that operate a full-time adult education program are limited to 15 hours of a.d.a. per week for adult secondary students who are enrolled in an independent study program. (If adult schools offer Adult Secondary Education programs only four days a week, the limit is 12 hours of attendance for the independent study program.) In the other four authorized areas (older adults, parenting, health and safety, and home economics), districts may claim no more than 15 hours of attendance per student per week. A student may attend classes in those subjects for more than 15 hours per week, but districts may claim no more than 15 hours per student per week for apportionment.

Attendance accounting procedures are carefully monitored by the CDE. School districts are required to have their attendance accounting system approved by the CDE School Fiscal Services Division. Each district must develop and maintain an adult education attendance accounting system that identifies students, the classes that students enroll in, and the hours they attend classes. The district must submit its adult education attendance system, including the forms it uses to collect attendance data, for approval to the CDE. Each district must keep the CDE's letter of approval and the district's submission package for its adult education attendance system on file. Districts must retain student enrollment forms for a minimum of three years. Records for high school subjects must be kept permanently.

The J18/19A (addendum) provides information to the California Department of Education on the accumulation of district a.d.a. in specific adult education instructional programs. The report shows the distribution of adult a.d.a. across ten authorized areas of adult instruction. http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ae/ga/j1819a.asp

### 3. Concurrently Enrolled High School Students

Adult education classes are designed for, and must be attended primarily by, adults. However, certain adult education classes may supplement and enrich a high school student's educational experience. High school students may enroll concurrently in adult education secondary classes to make up deficient credits needed for graduation.

The enrollment of concurrent students requires written documentation of a counseling session between a certificated representative of the high school and the pupil's parent, guardian, or caregiver. A school record of the session shall include a statement that the pupil is voluntarily enrolling in the adult education program and that the program will enhance the pupil's progress toward meeting the educational requirements for graduating from high school. High school students may attend adult education classes after having attended the regular school day, as defined by the local governing board.

Agencies must track all adult school a.d.a. generated by students concurrently enrolled in comprehensive high school classes and adult education classes. The amount of a.d.a. that an adult school is allowed to collect for attendance of concurrently enrolled high school students is limited to 10 percent of the district high school a.d.a. The CDE reimburses this a.d.a. at the same revenue limit rate as other adult student a.d.a.

Adult education classes shall not supplant the comprehensive high school program. The district should attempt to exhaust all other options before referring a concurrently enrolled high school student to adult education.

### 4. Revenue Limit

The revenue limit is the amount of money that the state reimburses adult education schools and programs for each unit of a.d.a. The revenue limit multiplied by the a.d.a cap equals the anticipated income. The revenue limit rate is established annually by the Budget Act. For example, if the revenue limit is $2,100 per a.d.a. and a district submits 100 units of adult a.d.a., then the income from the revenue limit would be $210,000.

### 5. Cap

School districts operating approved adult education programs have a legislatively-imposed a.d.a. cap on their a.d.a. funding, regardless of the enrollment growth they may have experienced. The cap is based on a formula legislatively established in 1979 plus modifications, including yearly budgetary growth allocations.

In 1992, legislation allowed union high school or unified districts that had not operated or received funds for an adult education program in the preceding year and that entered into a delineation of functions agreement with the community college to apply to the CDE for approval to start a new adult education program. These new programs were required to give priority to elementary and secondary basic skills, ESL, and citizenship programs. Approximately 160 new programs were added.

In 2005, Assembly Bill 23 authorized the redistribution of prior year adult education funds if an excess exists, and redistributes unused authorized limits of a.d.a. units. A Management Bulletin explaining AB 23 can be found on the CDE Web site at http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ae/ir/mb0501.asp.

### 6. Apportionment Payments

Apportionment is the amount of state revenue that a district receives for adult education a.d.a. reimbursement in a given year. Each year's apportionment is dispersed in monthly payments that reflect calculations derived from a combination of actual data and estimates until the annual data have been reported. More detailed information can be found in the Schedule of State Controller's Warrants at http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/pa/scwarrants.asp.

Adult education administrators report adult education attendance to their districts. Each district then reports a.d.a. to the County Office of Education and the state using Principal Apportionment software. This is submitted by each county to the CDE three times each year, usually within two weeks of the end of each reporting period.

| Reporting Period | Attendance Months | Due to CDE |
|---|---|---|
| P1 | July 1 – December 31 | January |
| P2 | July 1 – April 15 | May |
| Annual | July 1 – June 30 | July |

Annual data are revised at each reporting period. Each district reports its a.d.a. numbers according to district procedures. The district usually combines all site numbers into one report for its County Office of Education, which in turn submits the report to the CDE. Because each district has its own procedures, administrators should check with their district offices regarding local procedures.

Advance apportionments to the district are based on the school district attendance reported to the CDE. The CDE bases the amount of the fiscal year's first seven monthly payments (July through January) on the a.d.a. that each district has reported previously and the current year's revenue limit (dollars per a.d.a.). After the P1 reporting period, the CDE recalculates and certifies each district's apportionment, using actual and estimated data and the current year's revenue limit. This First Principal Apportionment calculation determines the amount of monthly payments from February through May.

After the P2 reporting period, the CDE again recalculates each district's apportionment amount, using nearly complete a.d.a. data for the year and the year's revenue limit. Using this Second Principal Apportionment calculation, the CDE disperses the balance of the year's estimated apportionment to each district in July.

The CDE certifies the annual data for of each year's apportionment in February of the following year. The Total Block Entitlement amount derived in the annual calculation in February is often different from the amounts determined earlier. Any difference in these amounts is shown as a "prior year adjustment" in the prior year corrections file and disbursed with the following year's apportionment. Revised annual data may be reported by districts in the R-1, R-2, and R-3 reporting periods. These data are recertified again and adjustments, if any, appear in the prior year adjustments. Adult education agencies should be diligent in preparing for prior year corrections and should maintain sufficient funds in contingency reserves.

## Resource Documents*

California School Accounting Manual  http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/ac/sa/index.asp

Adult Education Handbook http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ae/ir/documents/aehandbook2005.pdf

Education Code  http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lr/cl/

***These documents can be purchased through the CDE Press, and portions can be found online at the CDE Web site, http://www.cde.ca.gov. Additional information can be found at the Adult Education Office Web site, http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ae.**

# The Smart Manager's Budgeting Tips

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## Introduction

All adult education administrators face the challenge of stretching limited funds to meet increasing needs. The basic structure of an adult school's budget is built on Education Code requirements and on budgeting information found in the *California School Accounting Manual*. Once a school has its basic budgeting requirements in place, it has the flexibility to build program areas to meet specific demands of the local community. This article will first identify some "Adult Education Commandments of Budgeting" that set adult programs apart from other public education programs. Then the article will outline a basic framework for projecting funds, and for building and monitoring a budget.

## Overview

Adult education is a categorical program in the state budget, funded with Proposition 98 dollars. Adult schools frequently access other funding, including federal, local, and private sources of income.

Before building a budget, it is essential for district personnel and the adult school administrator to understand that the district must establish and maintain a separate fund for all adult school transactions. Adult school funds may only be spent on appropriate adult education expenses. Income from other district funds may not be used for adult education.

Another important budget consideration that separates adult education from K-12 education is that adult schools receive significantly less per unit of ADA than K-12 schools. This unit of reimbursement is called the *revenue limit*, and for adult schools, it historically calculates at approximately 50 percent of the revenue per ADA received by K-12 schools. Any increase in the revenue limit is legislated through annual Budget Act language and is based on COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment). The CDE apportions to each adult school a maximum amount of revenue limit funds that it may earn each year, known as the school's "CAP."

## The Ten Commandments of Adult Education Budgeting

If there were a list of ***Adult Education Commandments of Budgeting***, it might begin like this:

**One:**

**Thou shalt be aggressive and creative in finding enough funds to provide a quality program (because state apportionment is not enough).**

Adult Education's low revenue limit combines with rising costs of living (especially rising costs of health care benefits) to increase the likelihood that adult school administrators will need to look for alternative sources of income. Adult schools commonly use several federal funding sources to supplement programs: the Workforce Investment Act, Title II funds for programs that support students functioning below a high school level, including EL Civics funds for English as a Second Language and citizenship education, and Carl Perkins for career technical education programs. Adult schools are currently spending a significant percentage of these federal grants on supporting the accountability and record-keeping requirements of the grants themselves, as well as the reporting requirements of other state mandates. Furthermore, these funds are considered "soft money" and can become unavailable, depending on the national economy and sometimes on the state's ability to provide matching funds. As a matter of survival, most adult schools seek additional financial support through local businesses, foundation grants, joint-use-of-facilities agreements, and other collaborative arrangements that help supplement the adult school budget.

**Two:**

**Thou shalt not spend apportionment dollars if thou canst not generate the ADA.**

One of the greatest skills developed by experienced adult school administrators is the ability to track ADA and monitor spending so that it will not exceed income. For this reason, the majority of adult school programs hire part-time instructors who can be laid off if attendance patterns change, if the community has less need for a class, or if a class is not meeting students' needs.

**Three:**

**Thou shalt become proficient in predicting how much ADA thou canst generate to plan thy program and pay expenses.**

One of the greatest challenges for adult education administrators is to anticipate the needs of the local community and plan appropriately. It is critical for the administrator to watch local economic and labor trends closely, and to prepare for potential increases or decreases in student enrollment. Historically, when the economy is strong, the community demonstrates less demand for adult education programs.

**Four:**
**Thou shalt protect our future funding with diligence in accountability efforts**.

Adult education has not escaped the current demands for accountability. Legislators want proof that schools are using state and federal dollars efficiently and effectively, and that they can demonstrate specific and measurable outcomes from adult students. Without the necessary data, the field of adult education will lose the fight for an increase in revenue limits and will continue to lose state dollars. Adult education agencies must be diligent in collecting four types of data:

- Entry Records and Update Records on all students in all programs: These help the state legislature analyze current needs for adult education services and help justify the need for CalWORKs funding, above CAP, specific to adult and ROC/P programs.
- Workforce Supplemental Forms for all CalWORKs students: These demonstrate the significant gains made by clients referred for education services.
- Workforce Supplemental Forms and signed Privacy Notices for vocational programs. These forms meet the requirement of the *Performance Based Accountability* legislation for collecting outcome data from vocational training students: They are used to compare the outcomes of vocational students in adult schools with the outcomes of vocational students in other state-funded training programs. If agencies such as community colleges and for-profit training centers can demonstrate greater outcomes than adult schools, then they will gain funding and adult schools will lose funding.
- CASAS benchmark data, entry and update records, and attendance hours between pre- and post-testing sessions: These must be gathered for performance-based funding under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act.

When these four sources of data are compiled statewide, they help to describe California's system of adult schools to stakeholders and funding agencies. These data not only describe adult students and their reasons for attending adult education programs, but they also quantify adult school successes in meeting students' needs. It takes everyone's effort to give a positive account.

**Five:**

**Thou shalt use five (5) percent of thy apportionment dollars for innovation in delivery of instruction only if approved by CDE.**

EC 52522 allows adult schools to use 5 percent of their CAP for delivery of instruction outside of traditional classroom settings. Such delivery systems benefit adults who cannot attend school on a regular schedule or who cannot attend on the schedule determined by the local adult school. Such systems also help many districts reach their CAPs by reaching out to new populations of students. The most common alternative-delivery systems used by adult schools include programs sponsored by educational cable TV stations, and check-out systems through which students borrow videotapes, audio tapes, laptop computers, and/or supplementary instructional materials.

Before an adult school may start one of these innovative programs, it must get approval of its plan from the California Department of Education, Educational Options Office. Schools must apply for such approval annually.

**Six:**

**Thou shalt not rely on concurrently enrolled high school students to build thy ADA**.

First, it is important to note that adult schools may serve concurrently enrolled high school students, and the Education Code permits it, under very controlled situations (E.C. 52500 and 52500.1). It is critical that adult schools serve high school students cautiously and follow the intent of the law as outlined in E.C. 52523.

The first priority of the adult school must be to serve adults. All classes must meet the following tests: the classes must be designed and advertised for adults, and they must be offered at times and locations convenient for adults. If most of the students in a high school completion class are not adults, assure that the class meets the above-mentioned tests. Adults must receive preference for enrollment in the adult school program.

E. C. 52523 is specific about the circumstances under which concurrently enrolled students can enroll in adult education classes. The issue is one of long-standing controversy between adult schools and the Department of Finance, which trains its auditors to look carefully at documentation for concurrently enrolled students.

**Seven:**

**Thou shalt not charge more for fee-based classes than it actually costs to offer the fee-based program.**

When fees are charged to students in community interest or "fee-based"classes, the total of the fees and the revenues cannot exceed the cost of all such classes. The use of the fees must be clearly documented and cover all program costs, including marketing, facilities, instructors, materials, and other operational costs. (E.C. 52612). The budget of the fee-based program must be accounted for separately from the income and expenses of the state apportionment classes.

**Eight:**

**Thou shalt not share or mix thy adult education funding with other K-12 funding or covet K-12 General Funds.**

The adult education entitlement must be deposited in a separate fund of the school district. Money in the adult education fund can be used only for adult education purposes and funds received by the district for other programs cannot be used by adult education. (E.C. 52616)

The penalty for improperly transferring adult school funds to the district's general fund is that the district must transfer <u>double</u> the amount back to the adult school fund and utilize those moneys for improvements to the adult school program.

**Nine:**

**Thou shalt not use adult education funds to pay for administrators in K-12.**

Adult education funds can be charged for the activities of a K-12 administrator only when auditable documentation demonstrates that those activities are school-administration or pupil-services that exclusively support the adult education program. The person providing the administration must be the immediate supervisor of adult school personnel. (E.C. 52616.4)

**Ten:**

**Thou shalt not charge fees of any kind**
**to students with skills below the high school diploma level.**

No charges of any kind may be made for a class in English, citizenship, adult basic education, or high school diploma. (E.C.52613). This does not mean that the program must buy textbooks for students to take home with them. The program must provide textbooks for students to use within the classroom. Many adult school programs ask students not to write in the books, but to write their responses on loose sheets of paper. The adult school may offer books for sale, but must also make them available for use in the classroom for free.

In summary, the adult education administrator is responsible for determining how much income the adult program will generate, for building the budget, and for ensuring through constant monitoring that the budget is not overspent.

## Determining State Funding and ADA Cap

The formula for determining an adult school's income from state apportionment is based on the state's revenue limit and the school's Average Daily Attendance (ADA). ADA is calculated by adding up all hours of attendance generated by the adult students and dividing by 525. Each compilation of 525 attendance hours earns the program one unit of ADA. Multiply these ADA units by the revenue limit to determine the school's total income. For example, if a program generates 100 units of ADA, and the revenue limit is $2242.94, then the program's income from state apportionment is $224,294.

52,500 attendance hours ÷ 525 = 100 ADA

100 ADA x $2242.94 = $224,294

To predict ADA for making budget projections, first consider the amounts of ADA that the program generated in the previous two or three years. Contact the CDE Adult Education Office consultant for your area at (916) 322-2175 to determine the program's "CAP," or the maximum number of ADA for which the program will be reimbursed. Consider a variety of other factors to predict the amount of ADA the program might generate in the coming year. For example, during recessions, adult schools are generally busy serving the needs of the unemployed, who need to increase their skills to get jobs. In some geographic areas, demographic and population shifts dictate the community's needs for adult education classes. An influx of refugees into a community may signal a need for additional English as a Second Language classes. The start-up or closure of a major employer in an area could indicate the need for increased vocational training.

Adult education receives 2.5 percent growth in ADA CAP annually, as provided in statute. To determine an agency's CAP projection, increase its current ADA CAP by 2.5 percent. For example:

| Current Year's ADA CAP | Projected Growth | Following Year's ADA CAP |
|---|---|---|
| 100 | (2.5 percent) 2.5 | 102.5 |

After the administrator determines how much ADA the program is likely to generate (and verifies that this total does not exceed CAP), the next step is to multiply the school's number of ADA by the state's revenue limit. (All adult schools now receive funding at the same rate, after several years of an equalization process.) This calculation will yield the projected total state apportionment funding for the program. At this point, the administrator can begin to build the budget.

## Building the Budget

The first step in building the adult school budget is to estimate all costs for full- and part-time personnel, including benefits required according to district contract agreements. These calculations should include administrative, instructional, and support personnel. Other employee-related expenses that are allowable and should be included in the budget projections include textbooks, instructional supplies, travel expenses and conference expenses for employees.

*A special note for new adult school administrators*: Adult schools must remain flexible and responsive to changing community needs, and hence they must be able to open and close classes as needs arise. For this reason, the majority of instructional staff hired by adult school programs are part-time employees, and many do not work enough hours to qualify for health and other fringe benefits. Districts handle "contracts" for adult school instructors in widely different ways. Some districts tie compensation of adult school instructors directly to the district's teachers' union contracts, and others do not.

In many districts, personnel who oversee more than one program area also administer adult schools. The district can only charge administrative costs to the adult education program if they are supported by auditable documentation that shows the costs are directly related to the adult education program. For example, if the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction works closely with the adult school program, the representative percentage of time spent with the adult school program can be charged to adult education. Only that time spent exclusively with adult education can be charged. In another example, if the adult school principal operates the continuation program during the day and the adult school in the evening, only the evening hours can be charged to the adult school budget.

The size of the adult school program determines the need for facilities and the resulting costs. Many adult programs are the exclusive users of district-owned facilities that do not meet the

Field Act regulations and cannot house school-age children. In this situation, the adult program is responsible for the maintenance and operation costs of the facility. When the adult program shares the use of a district facility, the district may charge the adult program only for the portion of facility occupation that the adult program uses. Auditable documentation must be available to support such charges. When there is no district-owned site available for adult education, the adult education program may pay to acquire or restore facilities, including costs for debt service needed for acquisition or restoration.

**Fee-based Classes**

Numerous school districts across the state are serving growing numbers of adult school students, yet find that small ADA CAPs are constraining their adult school services. In such circumstances, *fee-based* and *community interest* programs are valuable in helping adult schools to respond to the educational needs of their communities, particularly in the areas of health and safety, home economics, arts and theater, and older adult programs.

When including fee-based classes in the adult school budget, the administrator must keep two compliance issues in mind:  First, the school cannot collect any ADA for any fee-based class. Second, the fees collected for a fee-based class cannot exceed the cost of providing the class.

**Indirect Costs**

Before getting ready to finalize the budget and spend money, the adult school administrator should keep in mind that the school district may charge for indirect costs against the total adult school income in one of two ways.

Following the first strategy for charging indirect costs, the district charges according to the cost rate cap that the California Department of Education sets each year, usually between 4 and 5 percent. This approach is used in almost all districts. (In technical terms, the cost rate cap is determined by using the lesser of: (a) the statewide average indirect rate for the second prior year, or (b) the school district's prior year indirect cost rate as approved by the California Department of Education.) When the adult school uses district-owned facilities, the district may treat associated plant-maintenance and operations expenses as direct costs, and charges those in addition to indirect costs.

A Revenue Worksheet is attached to the end of this article to provide guidance in the initial budget-projection process.

## Monitoring the Budget

It is usually best to generate separate budgets for each of the program areas that the adult school offers, such as vocational education, high school/GED, and English as a Second Language. Within each program's budget, outline all costs of supporting the instructional program, including personnel and instructional-support costs, contracts and leases, and professional development costs. Some programs might incur unique expenses. For example, a large English as a Second Language program might require its own separate copy machine with a maintenance agreement. An auto mechanic training program might need to pay a fee for waste removal. Off-campus classes often incur facilities rental fees. Maintaining separate program budgets can help an administrator to monitor the expenses of different programs and determine whether those expenses exceed the income the programs generate through ADA.

In some cases, one program may generate more ADA and income than it needs and can help other program areas that tend to have small class sizes, such as adult basic education and citizenship classes. In districts where ESL classes are large, the income generated in this program area can support other program areas. A skillful adult school administrator can balance the budget and keep smaller classes open by looking for such attendance trends.

## In Summary

Budgeting with limited adult education funds requires attention to detail, some creative thinking, and fairly accurate skills in estimation. Once an administrator understands how to follow the intent of the Education Code's budget language as it relates to adult school programs, then budgeting activities can be as flexible as necessary to respond to community needs within the ten authorized program areas. If the community demands additional classes outside the range of the authorized areas, the adult school can develop fee-based classes.

New administrators should participate in regional and statewide meetings of adult education professional organizations* for updates about funding. These networks of experienced administrators are always willing to share their knowledge. For local contacts, check the California State Consortium for Adult Education's website (www.cscae.org) for a directory of adult education administrators listed by county.

* Adult Education Committee, Association of California School Administrators (ACSA)
California Council of Adult Educators (CCAE)
California Adult Education Administrators Association (CAEAA)
California State Consortium of Adult Education (CSCAE)

REVENUE WORKSHEET
for the Budget Development Process

## Anticipated Income

Apportionment (ADA x Revenue Limit)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ABE | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |
| ASE (HS/GED) | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |
| ESL | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |
| Citizenship | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |
| Handicapped | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |
| Vocational | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |
| Parent Education | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |
| Older Adult | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |
| Health/Safety | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |
| Home Economics | ________ | x | ________ | = | ________ |

Subtotal ________

Other Income

- Apprenticeship (if applicable) ________
- Lottery (if applicable) ________
- Income from class materials fees (if applicable) ________
- Income from sale of materials (if applicable) ________
- Community Ed. (Fee Based) Income (if applicable) ________

Subtotal ________

Federal/State Grants/Projects

- WIA – Title II, Adult and Family Literacy ________
- EL Civics ________
- Carl Perkins ________
- Other ________________ ________
- Other ________________ ________

Subtotal ________

Contract Programs/Other Income

- Employment Training Panel ________
- ________________ ________
- ________________ ________

Subtotal ________

**Total Anticipated Income** ________

**Less Projected Indirect** ________

**TOTAL AVAILABLE BUDGET** ________

# Augmenting the Adult School Budget

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## Introduction

Balancing the adult school budget can be an agonizing or an empowering process, depending on the individual administrator's approach. Adult school administrators often face uncertainties on both sides of the budget sheet, that is to say, on both the revenues and expenditures sides. On the revenue side, uncertainties may include unexpected changes in adult education revenue-limit funding (i.e., ADA reimbursement), unavoidable delays or changes in letters of encumbrance, and student attendance deficiencies in classes that generate ADA reimbursement.

On the expenditure side, there may be uncertainties related to staff cost of living adjustment (COLA) increases, unexpected salary increases or benefits hikes, increases in rents or utility rates, and damage to or loss of instructional materials, equipment, and facilities. Other issues that also can have an impact on the budget include unresolved or ongoing political issues at the state level, poor communication between an adult school and its local district business office, and administrative turnover.

Administrators can protect their budgets from unpredictable shortfalls by securing additional monies from outside sources. Commonly, such outside funding flows from two broad streams: grants and donations, and fee-based community classes and programs.

## Grants and Donations

An adult school can seek grants and donations from individuals, businesses, and/or community agencies. Cash grants, donations of goods, and in-kind services can all provide revenue cushions to augment the adult school budget. It is worth an agency's time and effort to seek grants and solicit donations. Although the process of seeking outside funding may seem daunting at first, experienced administrators report that, with each success, the process becomes increasingly familiar and easy to manage. To secure outside funding, the adult school has four responsibilities that are ongoing and continuous. These responsibilities are described below.

1. <u>Collaboratively identify school goals and funding priorities</u>. Set aside at least six months to create a Development Team, composed of representatives from various sectors within the school (i.e., students, teachers, department coordinators, administrators, support staff). Have the Development Team review your school's mission statement and its goals and objectives. As a team effort, decide on the goals that require additional funds or resources to meet the needs of your adult school program and the educational needs of your community. Sort those goals into short- term and long-term categories, prioritizing the goals within each category. Choose no more than two or three goals to begin work on. Be sure that at least one of the goals you select is short-term. The achievement of a short-term goal early on in the process of seeking funding will energize the Development Team and give it a sense of accomplishment at that same time that it will lend credibility to your efforts in the eyes of the larger staff of the school.

2. Establish and Nurture Community Contacts. Get to know your community. Get involved personally in local businesses and service agencies. For example, participate in local chamber of commerce events; volunteer to serve on boards of local businesses and service agencies; host an open house and other events for the community on your campus. Learn as much as possible about your community, your students, and the resources in your area. Consult your local chamber of commerce directory for business contacts. Be sure that you do not overlook small businesses because they often are especially accessible and supportive. Community agency contacts can be found through city and county offices. Ongoing community involvement puts your adult school and its offerings in the limelight, thereby making it more attractive to potential sponsors.

3. Identify potential funding sources. With your Development Team, start matching your adult school's identified priorities to the goals of potential funding sources. Research the activities that various funders are/are not likely to support. Investigate funding sources by phone, mail, and the Internet. Create a diagram that matches potential funders with your school's specific needs. Inquire of leaders of other adult schools about their experiences with various funding agencies. Prioritize funding sources, taking into consideration application deadlines, funding amounts, funding restrictions, and accountability requirements. Also consider whether the period of the grant award and whether the funding agency permits grantees to reapply for funds beyond the initial grant period. Guided by all these considerations, choose two or three grants or donations to pursue. Some private foundations that support educational projects include Koret, Packard, and Kaiser. Adult schools can also seek grants from public sources including Even Start, Welfare-to-Work, One-Stop Centers, and the California Department of Education. You can find valuable grant information on the OTAN Web site, www.otan.us

4. 4. Develop, Write, and Submit Applications for Grants and Donations. With your Development Team, review the requirements of each grant application. Once you have decided on the funding source for which you wish to apply, ask your team to help conceptualize and outline the main points of the proposal. Divide the proposal into sections and delegate the writing to those who are best qualified to respond to each section and to develop a first draft. Identify individuals to serve as final-draft writers and information-gatherers. Identify someone to produce a polished budget request. Appoint an overall coordinator to ensure that the application process is followed precisely and in a timely manner, including mundane but essential tasks such as content review, style review, proofreading, printing, signature-gathering, duplication of copies, and mailing/delivery of the application. Many grant proposals are disqualified because they are incomplete, off-topic, or received past the advertised due date. Make a follow-up phone call after your grant application has been received at the funding agency to inquire if everything is in order and to alert the funder that you are available to answer questions or provide additional information about your proposal.

   You do not have to hire a professional grant writer to write successful proposals. Your Development Team can collaborate to gather the necessary information, with the final writing being handled by a good writer on your staff who is not necessarily an expert on the topics covered in the grant application.

When reviewing the final draft, be sure the information provided is accurate and that the proposal clearly identifies the following: the population you intend to serve, the population's specific needs, the proposed project's goals and objectives, the activities that will accomplish those goals, a timeline for project completion, your accountability and evaluation processes, and an error-free budget page. The budget generally lays out all costs for salaries, benefits, instructional materials, non-instructional supplies, professional development of staff, administrative overhead, and local contributions or in-kind offerings.

Be sure to obtain a certified, return receipt when using mail services to submit a grant application. Funding agencies generally do no accept faxed grant applications. Remember to retain both an electronic file and a hard copy of your completed proposal for you files. You may need to refer to these files if the funder contacts you with questions about the proposal. You may also find that sections used for one proposal can serve as boilerplates for similar sections in other proposals, so the electronic files may come in handy.

## Fee-Based Community Classes and Programs

If your adult school is responsive to the needs of your community, there is a potentially never-ending stream of funding that your school can realize from offering fee-based community classes and programs. For this to occur, your adult school must have a clear identity, know and analyze its competition, and recognize and respond to the needs of the community through its programming. For the successful operation of a fee-based program, an adult school has four responsibilities that are ongoing and continuous. These responsibilities are described below.

1. <u>Identify school goals and strengths</u>. Form a representative Outreach Team, similar to the Development Team discussed under the section on Grants and Donations, to lead the process of establishing a solid fee-based program. To enter into the marketplace, the school must know what it has of value to offer the community. At times, the school will need to invest in itself to increase the value of its offerings. For example, the school might purchase upgraded computer equipment to enable it to offer current technology courses. The school should make such investments with school-wide goals in mind, seeking to enhance the image of the adult school throughout the community.

2. <u>Establish and Nurture Community Contacts</u>. The community information needed by the developers of successful fee-based programs is similar to the information needed by grant writers. Conduct your own community surveys or obtain current profiles and needs assessments of your community. Network with local adult schools and community agencies for ideas, resources, and qualified teachers. Get tips, ideas, and support from colleagues who run successful fee-based programs. Approach local businesses about offering classes at their sites and about recruiting qualified part-time instructors to staff your fee-based classes.

3. Link Your Program to Community Needs. Tap the experts who may be hidden in your school and invite them to participate in brainstorming for ideas about new programs and classes, with special consideration given to topics that might currently be popular. Solicit ideas for new courses and recruit topic-specific teachers by advertising widely, including placing notices in your course catalog, within your campus, and on your adult school Web site. Continue to evaluate and review current and potential offerings and instructors at your adult school. Keep a constant eye on local competition; observe what the competition offers and the success of these offerings. Consider whether you might also offer or expand on curses that are popular in your community.

4. Schedule and Offer Fee-Based Classes and Programs. Schedule classes that seem to fit special niches and are not offered anywhere nearby, offer more sections of popular classes that fill up each semester, and seed new classes to expand your offerings. Build on current offerings, but do not hesitate to take a chance and start something new. Be sure to maintain collected fees and expenses from fee-based classes separate from those of state and federally funded (ADA reimbursable) classes. If you charge a fee for a class, you may not collect ADA for the same class.

Augmenting your adult school budget need not be a mystery. A financially solvent adult school is an energized adult school with a vision for the future. Financial solvency is based, to some degree, on cost flow. In other words, an agency must maintain some revenue to cover expenses, seed new programs for growth, remain competitive in the education market, and maintain an adequate reserve. Applying for grants and donations as well as developing fee-based programs are effective ways to contribute to your school's overall financial health.

**Collaboration + Community + Creativity = Profitability**

# Fee-based Classes

Author: *Ted Johnson*
Coordinator – Supplemental Instruction Service, Los Angeles Unified School District

## Introduction

Public education is designed to serve the long-term interests and needs of society. Programs sponsored by federal, state, and local government agencies usually are designed to increase the employability and productivity of citizens and to prepare them to function in a complex society. This ultimately increases contributions to the tax base and improves the quality of life for all.

Unlike publicly funded instructional programs that promote benefits to society as a whole, fee-based classes usually are designed to accommodate the personal interests and specific information needs of particular groups of adult students. Sometimes referred to as "community service classes," these fee-based classes can range from complete ten-week programs to single two-hour seminars. They can cover a wide variety of subjects, from "Ikebana Flower Arranging" and "Raising Earthworms for Fun and Profit" to "Computer Graphics" and "Estate Planning."

Adult schools that offer fee-based classes often realize many benefits. For instance, fee-based classes can provide excellent opportunities for schools to increase their client bases. Students who attend fee-based, special interest classes also are exposed to traditional, publicly funded classes and may enroll in those as well. When fee-based classes are designed to offer staff training to the local business community, they may provide adult schools with expanded access to new clients and facilities. In addition, fee-based classes present opportunities for adult schools to earn additional revenues to subsidize ongoing instructional programs. These revenues often are shared with school partners where facilities are shared, and they can pay for scholarships, thereby further serving the educational needs of the community. Such methods of income sharing serve as tremendous boosters of goodwill between the school and the local community.

## Setting Up a Fee-Based Program

An agency that is interested in setting up a fee-based program must address issues in the following areas:

- Relevant California Education Code;
- Marketing;
- Hiring or contracting qualified teachers; and
- Fee structures.

## California Education Code

Although the State of California allows fee-based programs, it by no means finances them. The State makes this clear in its Education Code, section 78300(c), which states that school districts shall not expend General Fund monies to establish and maintain community service classes. It gives school boards the right to (1) charge students enrolled in community service classes fees not to exceed the cost of maintaining those classes; (2) provide instruction in community service classes for remuneration by contract; and (3) provide instruction for remuneration through contributions or donations by individuals or groups. It also requires the establishment of guidelines that define the acceptable reimbursable costs for which fees may be charged, and it requires that accounting data be collected and maintained using uniform accounting procedures to ensure that General Fund monies are not used for community service classes. Announcements or news regarding such classes must clearly demonstrate that they are not regularly supported by state funds (Education Code Section 52506).

In addition to financial procedures, the State of California also regulates other aspects of fee-based classes. The California Education Code states that all persons who can profit from community service classes may enroll in such classes (Sec. 51811). Classes may be held for such length of time during the school year as may be determined by the governing board of the school district (Sec.51812). The governing board shall have the authority to grant certificates or other recognition of skill and accomplishment in community service classes (Sec. 51813). Attendance in community service classes must not be reported to the CDE for apportionment purposes. No apportionment from state funds shall be made to establish or maintain community service classes (Sec. 51814). The Education Code authorizes school districts to "act in any manner which is not in conflict with or inconsistent with . . . any law." Operation of community service classes with non-credentialed teachers is neither inconsistent nor in conflict with the law (Sec.52506).

## Marketing

Because fee-based classes often focus on the interests of particular clients, competitive marketing approaches may be needed, with advertising aimed at specific audiences. Knowledge of the local community is key to any marketing strategy. Adult schools can gain such knowledge through a variety of methods, including surveys of current students, focus groups with community members and local employers, and careful reviews of the classified advertising sections of local newspapers.

All fee-based classes and resulting promotional materials should link course content to current community needs. All promotional materials should open with strong, engaging sentences that clearly state course outcomes, and they should provide clear examples of ways in which particular classes help to solve specific problems in the community. Information about fee-based classes should be distributed through the same methods used for the school's traditional classes, i.e., through catalogs, flyers, brochures, newsletters, Web sites, and press releases. Additional efforts also may be needed, such as personal visits and presentations to local community groups and employers, displays at job fairs, display ads in local newspapers, and spots on local radio or public access television stations.

## Hiring or Contracting Qualified Teachers

Teachers of fee-based classes are not required to hold teaching credentials from the Commission on Teaching Credentials. These teachers, however, should be fully experienced, or possess specialized training, in the areas in which they teach. In addition, they should be competent as presenters and teachers, possess good people skills, and be able to represent the school in a positive light.

An adult school can add new teachers to its fee-based staff in one of two ways: hire them as classified teachers, or retain them as independent contractors. Schools that operate large fee-based programs often choose to hire fee-based teachers as classified employees. This approach answers district concerns for student safety and liability issues. Under this method of agreement, interested experts are fingerprinted, required to enroll in special teacher training classes, and hired as district classified employees. Classified teachers' salaries generally are equivalent to those of senior clerical staff, and they are paid according to pre-determined district pay scales.

For the most part, however, adult schools choose to retain fee-based instructors on an independent contractor basis. Although state law requires that all school *employees* be fingerprinted and cleared for employment by law enforcement agencies, this requirement does not apply to independent contractors. Generally, an independent contractor need only possess the necessary experience to teach the course in question. Some schools strongly recommend that such teachers enroll in new teacher courses, but this is not a requirement.

An approved professional-services contract must be used to engage the services of an independent contractor. California Education Code, Section 51810, states that the contracted conditions of a teaching assignment shall exist from the first scheduled event date through the final scheduled event date. General contract terms shall describe Contractor Qualifications specifying that the contractor should be qualified or exhibit expertise in the subject taught, but that the contractor is not required to obtain or maintain certification in the subject. Other necessary elements in a fee-based instructor contract include the following:

- Name of the school;
- Name of the Contractor/Consultant;
- Dates and Times of the Agreement;
- Cancellation and/or Rescheduling Policy;
- Compensation;
- Applicable Costs and Expenses;
- Disclaimers;
- Fiscal Issues;
- Employment Status; and
- Signatures of Authorized School/District officer and Contractor/Consultant.

Other conditions of employment commonly included in fee-based instructor contracts are the following clauses:

- Assumption of Expenses;
- Liabilities, if any;
- Contractor Shall Hold Harmless;
- Administration May Audit at No Charge;
- Instructor is Independent Contractor; and
- Contract Cannot be Assigned.

Instructor compensation may vary on a sliding scale depending on the contractor's level of expertise, or instructor fees may follow an established rate schedule. Instructor compensation generally is specified in the contract in one of two ways: (1) the contractor can receive a fixed dollar rate per hour/day/session taught, or (2) the school and the consultant can split the proceeds of the course by a pre-agreed percentage (60/40, 50/50, 70/30, etc.). Proceeds typically are calculated as Net Receipts, for example, the number of students enrolled in the second session of the class *times* the enrollment fee, *minus* refunds, facility rental fees, and unredeemable checks. Examples of two fee-based instructor contracts are included at the end of this article.

**Fee Structures**

The fees that adult schools charge for fee-based courses can range anywhere from $10 to $50 per session. Student fees should be determined by the total cost of instructor compensation, facility fees (if any), materials, supplies, and other relevant direct and indirect costs, divided by the number of students expected to enroll. A market survey of comparable programs in the area will provide guidelines for acceptable fees. Programs should avoid over-pricing or under-pricing their services.

In establishing class fees, programs should give special consideration to the costs of student materials and to indirect costs. A school may choose whether or not to include the costs of student materials and supplies in the fee for a class. If student materials and supplies are not included in the class fee, and if the school chooses to sell those items to students separately, then the price of those materials and supplies must be set according to the same percentage mark-up as the percentage that the school uses in selling items for use in publicly-funded classes.

Indirect costs need to be included when establishing class fees. Indirect costs include custodial and security services, utilities, space and equipment rental, and other overhead expenses that are over and above the district's budgeted resources.

## Example of a Typical Cost Analysis for a Fee-based Class

| | |
|---|---|
| Program: | **Dance and Exercise for Better Health** |
| Dates: | **36 Wednesdays** |
| Time: | **6:30-8:30 p.m.** |
| Student Fee: | **$144** (72 hours of instruction at $2 per hour) |
| Place: | **Multi-purpose room, Main Branch** |
| Contractor: | **Dance/Exercise Instructor** |
| Contractor %: | **60%** |
| School %: | **40%** (Instructor will not instruct for less than **$24** per hour, or **$1728** for full course.) |
| Minimum enrollment: | **20 persons** (maximum enrollment: 50) |
| Additional costs: | **None** (held during time when facility is regularly scheduled to be open; no student book or supplies sold; students asked to bring their own gym clothing, mat, towel, and permission from doctor to participate) |

| Cost Analysis Based on Enrollment of 40 students | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Expenses** | **Income** |
| Gross Receipts (40 students at $144) | | $ 5,760 |
| Overhead costs & supplies | $0 | |
| Net Receipts | | 5,760 |
| Contractor fee (60% net) | 3,456 | |
| Revenue to Adult School (40%) | | 2,304 |
| **Cost Analysis Based on Enrollment of 20 students** | | |
| | **Expenses** | **Income** |
| Gross Receipts (20 students at $144) | | $ 2,880 |
| Overhead costs & supplies | $0 | |
| Net Receipts | | 2,880 |
| Contractor fee (60% net) | 1,728 | |
| Revenue to Adult School (40%) | | 1,152 |

# Fee-Based Contract – Example 1

## (Compensation by fixed rate per hour/day/session)

1. This agreement is made and entered into this day of ____, 2003, by and between <School or District>, hereinafter referred to as the "district" or school, and <Name of Contractor/Consultant> herein after referred to as the "consultant":

WITNESSETH

2. <The consultant> agrees to render the following services:______________________ on the dates and times herein stated in accordance with directions stipulated by the district Superintendent of Schools or a person delegated by him/her:

3. Dates and Times: __________________ at the rate of $__________ per hour/day/session

4. The district agrees to compensate the consultant for services rendered not to exceed the total amount of ($ ) dollars such amount is to be paid within a reasonable time after the performance of the services.

5. In addition to the compensation stated in item:4 above, the district agrees to reimburse the consultant for actual and necessary traveling expenses or workshop supplies, not to exceed a total amount of $ __________ dollars.

6. It is agreed that the consultant is acting as an independent contractor and not as an agent or employee of the said school district, except in the event of services performed through the Early Retirement Program.

IN WITNESS WHEREAS, the parties hereto have executed this agreement on the day and year first above written.

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this ____ day of ________ 2003, by and between

CONTRACTOR SIGNATURE: ____________________________________________

CONTRACTOR NAME: ____________________________________________

ADDRESS: ____________________________________________

CITY & ZIP: ____________________________________________

PHONE NUMBER: ____________________________________________

SOCIAL SEC. NUMBER: ____________________________________________

AND

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

SIGNATURE: ____________________________________________

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

NAME: ____________________________________________

TITLE: ____________________________________________

PHONE NUMBER: ____________________________________________

# Fee-Based Contract – Example 2

## (Compensation by percentage of net receipts)

Whereas the contractor is specially trained, experienced and competent to perform the special services pursuant to this agreement; and WHEREAS the <District/School> desires the services of the Contractor; the Parties do hereby agree as follows:

1. The period of this agreement shall be from the first scheduled event date through the final scheduled event date.
2. The Contractor shall, in accordance with the specifications and standards established by the Principal or authorized designee, conduct the Fee-Based event listed herein.
3. The District shall pay to this Contractor - % of the NET RECEIPT enrollment fee; at the completion of each event. Net receipts are defined as the enrollment of the second session (first session if a one day program) times the enrollment fees; refunds, facility rental (if applicable), unredeemed dishonored check outstanding at the end (If the last event meeting and any other itemized direct costs associated with the conduct of the event.)
4. The District reserves the right to cancel the program.
5. Service shall also he pursuant to the general contracts included in the agreement.

### General Contract Conditions

1. The District shall pay the Contractor for services rendered upon submission of a roster for the activity and submission of invoices acceptable to the District and approved by the principal administrator of the school/district.
2. In the event the Contractor or the District cancels any activity, or any class meeting as part of such activity, for whatever reason, such activity may be rescheduled by written amendment to the contract from the District Representative to a later date mutually otherwise, the District shall not be liable for payment for such activity or event not conducted by the Contractor.

3. The Contractor shall assume all expenses, including but, not, limited travel expenses incurred by him/her in connection with performance hereunder.

4. The Contractor's performance of the services herein provided shall include, but is not limited to, ensuring the reasonably safe condition of premises and equipment, if any, prior to the commencement of each class, as well as providing proper safety instructions to all participants and maintaining appropriate supervision at all times.

5. The District shall not be liable to the Contractor for personal injury or property damage sustained by him in the performance of this contract, whether caused by himself, the District, its officers, agents or employees or by any third person.

6. The Contractor shall indemnify, hold harmless and defend the District, its Board of Trustees, its officers its employees and representatives from and against all liability, loss, cost and obligation on account, or arising from the negligent acts or omission of the Contractor in the performance of the services herein provided.

7. Events may be audited by the Fee-Based Program Staff Evaluator.  All other participants shall be charged a fee(s) as specified.

8. While performing services hereunder, the Contractor is an independent contractor and not an officer, agent or employee of the District.  The Contractor is expressly prohibited from promulgating, promoting or recommending products, services or materials for a fee in the classroom.

9. Neither party shall assign this agreement nor any part thereof without the written consent of the other party.

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this ____ day of ________ 2003, by and between

CONTRACTOR SIGNATURE: ________________________________

CONTRACTOR NAME: ________________________________

ADDRESS: ________________________________

CITY & ZIP: ________________________________

PHONE NUMBER: ________________________________

SOCIAL SEC. NUMBER: ________________________________

AND

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

SIGNATURE: ________________________________

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

NAME: ________________________________

TITLE: ________________________________

PHONE NUMBER: ________________________________

# Enrollment Policy Options: *Open Entry/Open Exit* and *Managed Enrollment*

Author: *Sylvia G. Ramirez*
Noncredit ESL Coordinator and Instructor, Mira Costa College

## Introduction

The new accountability requirements of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) have pushed adult education agencies to review their current practices and investigate ways to measure learning gains more accurately. In this context, reliable and convenient student enrollment policies are essential. Program directors are exploring the development of innovative policies that will allow them to meet federal and state requirements, encourage maximum daily attendance by learners, and accurately record all student enrollment, attendance, and goal-attainment activities within the agency. To meet these objectives, each agency must strike an appropriate balance between learners' needs for program flexibility on the one hand and the need for program stability on the other.

The appropriate enrollment policy to meet these various objectives is unique for each agency. Indeed, a given agency might find that different instructional programs within the agency call for different enrollment policies. The same might be true for different program sites within an agency. A range of enrollment policy options can be typified by two examples: "Open Entry/Open Exit" and "Managed Enrollment."

## Open Entry/Open Exit Enrollment

Open-entry/open-exit ESL classrooms have been a defining feature of ESL instruction. According to this policy, students may enter an instructional program at any time during the school year, attend class for an unlimited number of hours while acquiring appropriate skills and knowledge, exit the program upon goal attainment, exit the program due to external factors, and re-enter the program when able to do so.

Although this policy is student-oriented, it presents several instructional obstacles. Instructors find themselves constantly re-teaching material from previous lessons because new students continually enter their classes. There may also be learning challenges for students. Some may not take their studies seriously, placing a low priority on school attendance when other activities compete, knowing that they can re-enter the program at will. Students also complain that they cannot see progress and attribute their lack of progress to the constant turnover in their classes. Maintaining accurate student records within such a system also can be challenging.

For an open entry/open exit policy to work well for a given instructional program, the policy must be supported by two other program components. First, the instructional program must support learners in setting explicit instructional goals and must require learners to meet well-defined expectations of attendance and effort. Second, the instructional program must support teachers in data collection by promoting clear, consistent procedures and schedules for program-wide gathering of information on student enrollment, attendance, and goal achievement.

## Managed Enrollment

A *Managed Enrollment* policy offers several distinct advantages. According to this policy, a student may enter an instructional program only during specific enrollment periods, attend a specific class for the duration of the class term, continue in the same class for subsequent terms only by re-enrolling, and miss no more than a prescribed number of class sessions within a term.

In a well-articulated program that offers classes at many different instructional levels (e.g., an ESL program), a managed enrollment policy can enhance the program's stability, effectiveness, and accountability. The policy allows instructors to deliver coherent and focused curricula to well-formed classroom communities. It also frees instructors from the need to continually re-teach "old" material to newcomers. And it allows students to make firm commitments to attend and participate in classes for specific, limited time periods. These factors, in turn, allow for classroom instruction that progresses smoothly and swiftly and allows learners to experience the satisfaction of swift progress. Finally, well-defined enrollment periods greatly simplify program wide gathering of information on student enrollment, attendance, and goal achievement.

For a managed enrollment policy to work well for a given instructional program, the policy must respond to the changing needs of the learning community. Instructors, administrative staff, students, and other community members should collaborate to determine the appropriate length and schedule of class terms. As part of this process, administrative and instructional staff should consider recent patterns of student enrollment and student promotion.

All instructional staff members within a program also should collaborate to define curricula and exit criteria for each instructional level within the program. Even after class schedules and exit-level criteria have been set for a program, these are not set in stone. The managed enrollment policy should continue to evolve in an atmosphere where change is an ongoing process that meets the changing needs of learners, instructors, administrators, and the community.

## Mira Costa: A Case Study in Managed Enrollment

In the spring of 1995, Mira Costa College's noncredit ESL program conducted bilingual focus-group interviews with students in all instructional levels. The goal of the study was to determine students' reasons for studying English and to identify areas for program improvement. During the interviews, several students asked the same significant question, "How did I get placed in this level and how do I get to the next level?" This became the research question for a multi-year study that eventually garnered a grant from the California Community College's Chancellor's Office. The results of that study ultimately earned Mira Costa two Promising Practices Awards from the California Department of Education for the program's effective priority outcomes for seven levels of instruction and the resulting Managed Enrollment policy.

Mira Costa began by enlisting all noncredit ESL faculty in collecting data about their classes every eight weeks for a year. Instructors collected information in four major areas: (1) learner goals, (2) attendance patterns, (3) promotion rates from level to level, and (4) the criteria actually used for determining student readiness to advance a level. Examination of enrollment patterns revealed that almost 25% of the students left the program after one week of instruction and only 8% was promoted to the next level of instruction.

In the second year of the study, ESL faculty committees developed Priority Outcomes for seven levels of noncredit ESL instruction. These priority outcomes were developed to answer the original student question from the 1995 focus groups, “How do I get to the next level?” Mira Costa’s Priority Outcomes were derived from the faculty’s synthesis of the ESL exit-level criteria in the California Model Standards and their own experiences of actual classroom practice. These Priority Outcomes became the basis for student promotion to higher levels within the program and were field-tested and revised during the following year. Because instructors collaborated in the development of the Priority Outcomes, which became a “natural fit” with the program’s instructional practices, several benefits accrued to the program and its instructors.

Some of the findings from this process were:

1) There was natural buy-in from instructors in identifying priority outcomes because the outcomes were based on actual practice.
2) As instructors focused on the outcomes that students were expected to achieve, there were fewer discussions about having to “force” students to move up.
3) Instructors questioned promoting students who had not mastered all the content; the concept vs. content issue was meaningfully debated.
4) Instructors who said it was “just obvious” which students were ready to be promoted began articulating what “obvious” meant in objective terms.
5) Instructors often identified students with strong speaking and listening skills for promotion. Faculty discussed the importance of measuring reading and writing skills more carefully.

With priority outcomes in place, Mira Costa’s ESL Program instituted a managed enrollment pilot test at the program’s largest instructional site in the fall of 1999. The school year was divided into five eight-week terms with specific registration dates for each term. Incoming students were either enrolled in classes during the specified registration periods, or they were placed on waiting lists for classes in subsequent terms. Attendance policies were enforced. Students were warned that if they missed more than five classes during an eight-week term, they would be dropped from the rolls. Students who were unable to attend classes within this managed enrollment structure could choose to attend Mira Costa classes at other sites, enroll in distance learning classes, or take ESL instruction in the computer lab.

The results of Mira Costa’s pilot program demonstrated striking improvements in student retention and student promotion under the Managed Enrollment approach. During the first year of the pilot test, only two percent of students left the program after 12 hours of instruction, compared with 25 percent of students who left the program after one week of study before the new system had been implemented. In addition, 35 percent of the students were promoted each term during the first year of the pilot test and 50 percent were promoted each term during the second year, compared with only eight percent who were promoted during the year before the pilot test. Moreover, the program found that attendance figures rose during the first year of the pilot test, although no additional classes were offered and class sizes did not increase. Finally, so many of Mira Costa's ESL students showed significant learning gains on CASAS tests that the program exceeded its allotted ESL benchmarks by 50 percent! Twenty percent of those students gained two ESL levels or more, based on their CASAS reading scores.

At the end of the pilot study, faculty, staff, and students were surveyed for their reactions to the new system. One hundred percent of the faculty and staff voiced their approval. They reported that students liked the eight-week sessions. Instructors reported that their students were excited about using the priority outcomes because they were better able to make the connection between completing the assessments and completing the levels of instruction. In addition, faculty reported that, because students were being promoted more quickly, they demonstrated greater incentive to study.

The survey of students indicated that 67 percent approved of the eight-week sessions. Thirty-three percent requested more time. However, a closer look at the data indicated that 29 percent were in classes where there was little or no emphasis on priority outcomes.

The most striking difference between student responses during the original focus-group interviews and their responses to the post-pilot-test survey was students' increased ability to articulate their progress in skill development through the program levels. Under a system of priority outcomes and managed enrollment, Mira Costa ESL students can now answer the question, "How did I get placed in this level and how do I get to the next level?"

For more detailed information about Mira Costa's ESL program and a listing of the priority outcomes as well as grammar priorities for seven levels of ESL instruction, visit: http://www.miracosta.cc.ca.us/conted/esl/default.html

Programs that are considering implementing a managed enrollment policy may find the following list of steps helpful:

1) Identify specific program issues by talking to faculty, students, and community members.
2) Study student enrollment patterns as well as retention and promotion data.
3) Establish session lengths based on student data.
4) Develop curriculum and priority outcomes for the designated sessions. Faculty involvement is essential.
5) Pilot the plan with enthusiastic faculty at one site. Learn what works and what needs to be adjusted before expanding the program.
6) Remember that it is a pilot. Remove administrative threats (e.g., canceling classes with low attendance). This will allow faculty to focus on successful implementation strategies.
7) Develop an atmosphere in which change is an ongoing process to meet student, faculty, administration, and community needs.

# Getting Ready for CPM and WASC

Author: *Chris Nelson*
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## Introduction

Too often, the necessary preparations for Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM) just seem like more work piled on top of an adult school's ongoing efforts to run an efficient program. The same may be said about a school's preparations for an accreditation visit from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). In reality, the CPM and WASC processes are not merely necessary, they are also extremely helpful in advancing school improvement efforts, and the processes can even be easy. Instead of looking at CPM and WASC preparations only as monumental efforts, adult school administrators and their staff members should appreciate that CPM and WASC efforts result in blueprints for school success and direction for many years to come.

This article poses, and answers, some of the basic questions that arise when a school begins to organize itself for the CPM or WASC Accreditation visit. A list of hints is also provided at the end of this article to help ease the way for CPM and WASC preparation.

## What is CPM?

Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM) is a *State mandated* review of the educational programs in a school and a school district. The California Department of Education (CDE) reviews all K-12 categorical programs, including adult education programs. CPMs generally are conducted once every four years. The whole CPM cycle takes about two years, from the time the CDE notifies a district of the review schedule until the date of the actual in-person visit by a team from the CDE.

## How should a school prepare for the CPM?

Most schools begin their preparations as soon as the CDE notifies them that they are due for the CPM. Schools receive notification the year before an actual on-site visit is conducted. An adult school's CPM generally is one part of an overall CPM for the school's entire district. Each school receives a training guide that includes the instrument the CDE will use to check the school's compliance with California education code.

During the first year of the CPM process, the school conducts a self-study to locate and organize specific information that the CDE team will examine to ensure that the school is in compliance. The self-study is conducted according to the compliance guide, which includes accountability of programs and accountability of funding and budgeting. Through the self-study, a school usually identifies areas to improve in order to be in compliance.

During the second year of the CPM process, the school addresses the problematic issues identified during the self-study. The school remedies all problems by the end of the second year, when a CDE team visits the school to check for compliance. For additional hints on preparing for the CPM, see the list at the end of this article.

**Who oversees the CPM process?**

CDE representatives who are familiar with adult education compliance issues usually conduct monitoring of adult education compliance. They work with the school throughout the two-year CPM process and assist when the school has questions or concerns. Each district also has a coordinator who is responsible for all K-Adult compliance issues in the district. The adult school should take all questions and concerns to that district coordinator. Finally, the adult school should appoint a team from within the school and assign it the responsibility of ensuring that all parts of the CPM document are covered.

**What happens if the CDE team visits and determines that a school is out of compliance?**

In general, the school and the district are granted 45 days to achieve compliance. Sometimes, that timeline may be too short. In such cases, the district and the CDE can come to an agreement on the period within which the school will reach compliance in areas of concern.

Occasionally, an adult school may find that CPM findings can be helpful to the school's educational program. For example, the CDE has specific regulations concerning adult school offerings to concurrent high school students. Adult schools can find themselves out of compliance in this area, yet at the same time be unable to initiate the district-wide changes that would be necessary for compliance. In such cases, a CPM finding can help a district become compliant.

**What is WASC?**

WASC, or the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, is responsible for accrediting secondary and postsecondary education programs throughout the U.S. and the world. Accreditation is a *voluntary* process whereby a school conducts a self-study and produces a report. The resulting self-study report then serves as the basis for a school-wide review by a team of educators who are not employed by the district. The self-study and the independent review both assess the school according to a "Focus on Learning" evaluation, which looks at (1) the degree to which the school demonstrates clarity of purpose that is reflected through its leadership, instructional program, policies, and use of time and resources; and (2) the degree to which the school meets specific WASC criteria. Based on its evaluation, the WASC review team recommends a specific term of accreditation for the school. The maximum term of accreditation is six years.

**What is the Focus on Learning process?**

Focus on Learning is the current protocol for WASC accreditation. According to this protocol, representatives of all the school's stakeholders collaborate to generate products that impact student learning. These products include (1) a statement of the school's "Expected Schoolwide Learning Results" for every student; (2) a schoolwide overview of what students are doing and producing, developed through interdisciplinary dialogue, gathering evidence, and program analysis; and (3) the development, implementation, and accomplishment of a schoolwide action plan.

## What are the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results?

Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLR's) are the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that each student should know, understand, and be able to do upon exit from the school or upon completion of the planned program. These learning results are collaboratively developed by all the school's stakeholders and represent the focus of the entire school community.

## How does a school prepare for a WASC Review?

Preparation begins right away. A school that has never been through the WASC process can contact the WASC office (www.acswasc.org) to obtain application materials. When appropriate, WASC will schedule a two-member, one-day visit to the school to determine its candidacy for accreditation. If the determination is favorable, WASC will grant the school either candidacy or interim accreditation for a term of one to three years. The school is expected to apply for full accreditation during the interim period.

For full accreditation, the school must conduct a Focus on Learning self-study and prepare for a full visitation by a WASC committee. Based upon the WASC committee's findings, various initial terms of accreditation may be granted. Commonly, an initial accreditation term of three years is given. After this initial three-year term, and after its second WASC review, a school is often eligible for a six-year term of accreditation. During any term of accreditation, the school must provide periodic progress reports to WASC, either in writing and/or through on-site visits.

Once it has been accredited, a school does best to begin preparing for subsequent WASC site reviews at least two years before those visits. In fact, once a school has gone through the Focus on Learning process of WASC, preparation should be ongoing. An end result of the Focus on Learning process is an action plan that the school is required to implement through regularly scheduled activities in the school.

## Why should a school go through the WASC Accreditation process when it is merely voluntary?

Many schools become accredited because they have high school diploma programs and vocational training programs that require a certification for the students they serve. More and more schools are becoming accredited by WASC as accountability stakes in education rise.

## Top Ten Hints for Successful CPM and WASC Accreditation

1. **Begin early.**
   It is never too early to start working on the CPM or WASC process. By beginning early, a school will get more buy-in from its faculty and staff, and will generate a better product. The teams that conduct CPM and WASC visits can distinguish between a product that was slapped together at the last minute and one that is the result of considerable planning and preparation. They generally reward schools for thorough preparation.

2. **Involve the whole school.**
   Get key members of all stakeholder groups involved immediately. Those individuals can spread the word to all members of the school community about the importance of the compliance and accreditation processes. By making sure that all members of the school community understand these processes, the school can rest assured that any member of the school community will provide solid information to a visiting review team.

3. **Delegate the work.**
   There are many elements to the CPM and WASC processes, far too many for one person to handle. The school should assign a team of people to supervise all aspects of the CPM and WASC processes, making sure that individuals' responsibilities are fairly divided. No one person should feel responsible for pulling the whole process together for the entire school. On the other hand, one person should be assigned to oversee the production of the final self-study report so that it is cohesive and flows smoothly.

4. **Follow the action plan.**
   This is now a requirement. In the CPM, when necessary, a school has a timeline to follow for getting back into compliance. With WASC, the school must implement the action plan it developed during its self-study process. Focus on Learning emphasizes that school improvement is nothing if not continuous. Also, continuous effort makes it easier for a school to prepare for the next review team visit because continuous effort keeps documents in place, keeps committees meeting, keeps the school following through on its plan, and encourages ongoing stakeholder input.

5. **Include timelines in the action plan.**
   Timelines help keep everyone on top of things. When developing a timeline, start with the end result, which in this case would be a successful visit by a review team, and plan backwards. Allow plenty of time for writing, re-writing, and more re-rewriting. Considering the complexity of the CPM and WASC processes, these timelines should extend at least two years in advance of the actual review visits.

6. **Document, document, document!**
   Keep written records of everything. Make a file box of all documents produced for the CPM review team and keep it until the next visit. Even though review criteria may change, many of them do not. It is easier to collect updated versions of documents if examples of previously successful documents are already on hand.

   For WASC, the school must collect written documentation that shows the steps it has taken for school improvement. Meeting agendas, minutes, changes in forms and data will all be needed. Maintain and update files on an ongoing basis.

7. **Budget in advance for CPM and WASC.**
   With CPM, schools have no choice but to go through the process. It may be necessary to pay staff overtime or give them extra hours to complete some of the tasks required. For WASC, the school should make sure that it has adequate financial resources before undergoing the accreditation process. Depending on the school, WASC accreditation can cost anywhere from $5,000 to $50,000. It all depends on how much time the school is willing to finance for staff involvement beyond their regular classroom hours.

8. **Incorporate site-based plans with CPM and WASC plans.**
   If a school already has goals and objectives or a site-based plan, it should incorporate those into its CPM and WASC plans. Avoid duplication of efforts. Elements of one plan should be easily extracted for inclusion in other plans.

9. **Don't lose too much sleep!**
   It really isn't worth it to fuss and fret. By following the above advice, no one should lose too much sleep over CPM or WASC.

10. **And by all means, enjoy, enjoy, enjoy!**

# Community Collaborations: Successful Networking

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## Introduction

Adult schools across the state are facing serious challenges. Many lack the funding necessary to meet rising personnel costs, to replace obsolete equipment, and to expand programs. There are increasing demands at both the state and federal levels for greater accountability, and the needs of adult learners can stretch adult school resources to the breaking point. In the Governor's office and even within their own communities, adult schools may be overlooked, their legitimacy as providers of education challenged, and their access to resources denied. This may be particularly true when the local community does not know or understand the purpose of the adult school or the array of services it provides. For these reasons, it is incumbent on adult school administrators to heighten public appreciation of the contributions that adult schools make to their communities. Through collaborative efforts with other local agencies, businesses, and educational institutions, adult schools can build this appreciation, mitigate some of the problems mentioned above, and better leverage their own limited fiscal, physical, and human resources.

## Telling Our Story, Building Our Support Base

The first step in building local partnerships is to ensure that the community knows who the school leaders are, what the adult school does, and how the community already benefits from the school's offerings. Although many educational leaders lack experience in marketing and salesmanship and may shy away from this part of the job, successful adult school administrators accept that they must sell the community on the value of their local adult school programs. To accomplish this, the administrators must be active in the local community and work on building relationships with local government officials, agency representatives, and business people. Successful administrators ensure that high quality flyers and brochures about adult school programs get into the hands of community leaders. They invite community leaders to visit adult school classes and to serve on the School Site Council or School Advisory Committee. They join the local Chamber of Commerce, the local Workforce Investment Board, community task forces, and service clubs, and they take every opportunity to extol the virtues of the adult school and its programs.

## Choosing Our Partners

As the adult school's recognition and reputation increase within the community, the next step for school administrators is to determine the collaborative efforts that will best serve the needs of the school. Developing and maintaining community collaborations take considerable effort. The adult school that has no partnerships already in existence should start slowly and build gradually. Each time the administration commits the adult school to a new venture, the school's reputation in the community is put on the line. Future partnerships may depend on the success of ones already in motion.

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An agreement for a community collaboration should meet the following requirements:

1. It should benefit both/all parties;

2. The conditions governing the agreement should be contained in a written, signed document that should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis; and

3. There should be ongoing communication between the partners and an understanding that, should problems arise, they will be addressed quickly.

Each new collaborative relationship must be cultivated by an administrative leader who has the time, energy, and social skills required to ensure that the relationship will meet with success. Occasionally, a community organization will contact the adult school to propose a plan for joining forces. At other times, the adult school will be the initiator. In either case, it is the responsibility of the adult school administrator to weigh the investment of fiscal, physical, and/or human resources against the anticipated benefits that such an investment would bring to the school and its students. The fact that an organization wants to join forces with the adult school does not mean that the proposed partnership is necessarily a good idea.

## Determining the Nature of Our Collaborations

The size of an adult school or its surrounding community should not dictate the degree to which the school will pool resources with other agencies in collaborative efforts. For example, despite its small size, Santa Cruz Adult School (cap 716) has entered into a broad array of agreements with other local schools, educational/training programs, one-stop centers, job training support programs, social services agencies, and private sector businesses. Because Santa Cruz Adult School does not have its own campus, it has been forced to build close working relationships with other schools and agencies. This provides the school with a number of benefits, both cost-savings and otherwise (e.g., no mortgage or rent payments; increased access to students, with classes offered at 36 locations throughout the area). Its working relationships with various community agencies enables Santa Cruz Adult School to refer its students to services offered through other local programs and vice versa. This is particularly effective at local One-Stop Centers where the collocation of various partners under one roof provides increased access for potential clients. Additional benefits of shared facilities that accrue to Santa Cruz Adult School and other local agencies are that the partner agencies can (1) ensure that there is no duplication of efforts; (2) identify gaps in community-wide services; and (3) collaborate to close those gaps.

The table below provides examples of Santa Cruz Adult School's collaborations with other agencies, consortia, and local businesses.

| Collaborating Agency | Benefits to The School and Its Learners |
|---|---|
| **Elementary and Secondary Schools** | |
| Santa Cruz City Schools | • The adult school uses classroom space throughout the school district, which provides convenient class locations for students. |
| Live Oak School District | • The adult school works with a neighboring school district to bring family literacy, GED prep, vocational ESL, and parent education programs to the parents and other adults within the elementary school district. |
| **Other Schools and Educational/Training Programs** | |
| Cabrillo College | • ESL Programs are articulated with the local community college to facilitate transition between the adult school ESL program and college level ESL. |
| University of California at Santa Cruz | • The adult school shares teachers with the university, helping ensure that adult school teachers are top-notch.<br>• Tutors and practicum students from the university work in adult school ESL classrooms, providing one-to-one work with individual adult students and giving practical teaching experience to university students. |
| Adult Schools in the region | • Networking with other adult schools in the region allows teachers to share ideas and concerns and to observe best practices.<br>• Santa Cruz Adult School pooled funds with other Monterey Bay adult schools to have a regional TV commercial produced and aired on local TV stations. |
| **One Stops and Job Training Support Programs** | |
| Regional Occupational Program | • Shared space keeps costs down, facilitates referrals among agencies, and minimizes calendar conflicts.<br>• The adult school and the ROP were able to jointly purchase a computer lab at a local high school. |
| Local One Stops (Mid County and North County), Workforce Santa Cruz County | • Adult school representation on both the local Workforce Investment Board and the One-Stop Management Team guarantees the school a voice in education and training issues affecting Workforce Investment Act participants, and helps the school respond quickly to participants' identified needs.<br>• An Adult School Liaison facilitates referrals for clients and students between educational service providers (including community college and ROP) and job service providers (including CalWORKs, CareerWorks, EDD, and others). |

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| Career LADDERS Project (a Packard Foundation funded initiative) | • The adult school works together with other education/training providers to create an integrated workforce preparation system that offers multiple points of entry into jobs, training, and education for local county residents. |
| County of Santa Cruz HRA, CalWORKs and CareerWorks | • The adult school staffs a computer lab in a local One-Stop center and provides instruction in basic skills, GED Prep, ESL, career exploration, and keyboarding for One-Stop clients as well as the general public. In exchange, the school is given free access to two computer labs for older adult and fee-based computer classes. |
| Tech Prep, Monterey Bay Regional Partnership, Your Future is Our Business | • These organizations provide staff development, curriculum development, and consultation about school-to-career services available to adult school students. |
| **Social Service Agencies** | |
| Department of Corrections: Main County Jail, Women's Correctional Facility, CYA, and County Juvenile Hall | • The adult school provides GED, basic skills, and job development classes as well as GED test administration in local correctional facilities, helping inmates prepare to transition to community life beyond the prison walls. The adult school contracts with the County of Santa Cruz to provide these services. This arrangement provides an additional funding stream, but does not impact the school's ADA cap. |
| Immigration Project of Santa Cruz County | • This agency provides assistance and in-class presentations to adult school citizenship students. |
| Court Referral Program | • The court refers offenders to the adult school to work off fines either by studying basic skills or English or by doing community service projects at the school. |
| Community Children's Center | • The adult school refers its students to this agency for childcare. |
| Volunteer Center | • The center's Literacy Program provides the adult school with tutors to assist students in basic skills and ESL instruction. |
| **Private Sector** | |
| Local businesses including Seaside Company, Beta Technologies, Texas Instruments, and Santa Cruz Medical Clinic | • The adult school provides ESL and literacy instruction directly to employees, often at their worksites, in response to employer-identified needs. (For example, the adult school offered basic skills instruction to several Texas Instruments applicants who were unable to pass a pre-employment literacy test.) |

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| Miscellaneous business partners | • These individuals participate in the Adult School Advisory Committee, which facilitates communication, problem solving, and sharing of needs between the adult school and area businesses. These individuals also make classroom presentations to adult students about opportunities available and skills needed in the workplace. |
| Community TV and PBS | • These organizations provide videos and satellite downlinks for professional development (e.g., learning disabilities, GED Test changes) |

Community collaborations such those listed above enhance the day-to-day operations of an adult school as well as open up further opportunities. For example, an adult school stands a significantly better chance of writing a winning proposal for funding when it can demonstrate how various agencies will pool their resources to make things happen. When community agencies know about and respect an adult school, they will approach the school readily and invite the school to partner with them on grant proposals. This can be a win-win situation in that the adult school's presence in other agency proposals can add weight and validity to the proposal, while the adult school may realize new revenue sources.

The adult school administrator must work continually to build recognition for the adult school. By offering high quality programs that meet community needs, the adult school will enjoy enhanced visibility and recognition within the community. This translates to increased fiscal, physical, and human resources for the school as well as enhanced services for the school's adult learners.

# Marketing and Advertising Adult Education Classes

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## Introduction

The world of adult education stands alone from all other educational delivery systems in many ways. The age range of the adult school population stretches from high school seniors to senior citizens; the students come from a wide variety of educational, financial, geographic, ethnic and interest groups; and they can be intelligent, powerful, sophisticated, and demanding. Unlike elementary, middle, and high schools, where attendance is mandatory and students are geographically assigned to selected school sites and classrooms, adult education students are voluntary learners. In the truest sense of the work, adult students really are *customers*. The school has no leverage with which to keep students in class. If a program doesn't meet students' needs and interests, the students don't return—and the program is out of business.

## The Marketing Coordinator

At one time or another, most adult education teachers and administrators have been faced with the difficult task of trying to save a class or program that is about to close as a result of low attendance. Although all adult education programs perform some sort of mass distribution of basic publicity materials, in most programs the teachers are the ones who are individually responsible for recruiting enough students to make their classes "go" and for keeping those students in class. This approach is valid to a point. Teachers should be responsible for their classes, and a district can't be expected to float classes that don't pay their way. But this philosophy also places an unfair and impractical responsibility on teachers, because it asks them to perform professionally in an area in which they are often inexperienced and have no training. Most teachers believe that they were hired to *teach, not sell,* and they believe that finding students should be the district's responsibility.

Adult schools often find ways to pay for additional support staff such as secretaries, counter clerks, and registration personnel, all of whom are extremely valuable to the schools' viability, but none of whom carry the responsibility of finding, getting and keeping students. One of the best ways to overcome the problem of ineffective student recruitment and retention is to designate a school-wide *Marketing Coordinator.* Hire or assign a key person on-staff to be responsible for finding, analyzing and evaluating potential markets and for supervising efforts on an ongoing basis. Effective advertising campaigns must be continuously monitored, polished, refined, and improved. The cost of these efforts will be easily offset by increased registrations, expanded ADA, fewer closed classes, and overall quality enhancement of the adult education program.

If a program has absolutely no funds available to hire a Marketing Coordinator, it should attempt to fill this role in other creative ways. For example, an outside individual or agency can perform the work of a Marketing Coordinator on a *contingency* basis.

Following this scenario, the adult school would give a list of probable casualty classes to the consultant and offer to pay for each class the consultant "saves." ADA earned by those classes should offset the fees paid to the consultant. Another option would be for the school to identify a local company with a specific training need. The school can offer to provide that training in exchange for general assistance from the company's marketing or advertising department.

Once a Marketing Coordinator has been retained, that person has two major responsibilities: marketing and advertising. The purpose of marketing is to define the school's clientele and figure out how best to serve those clients. The purposes of advertising are to enhance the school's general image in the community and to alert potential students about specific course offerings.

**Marketing**

In adult education, marketing must involve both recruitment and retention efforts. Recruitment efforts should begin with studies of current trends and needs in the local community. Such research will help the adult school to design and offer new courses that meet those community needs. Part of this research should involve analyzing the local competition. What are they offering in terms of courses, facilities, instructors, quality, services, prices, and availability? The Marketing Coordinator should look to that information in considering how the adult school might improve its own delivery of services to the community.

An effective marketing strategy will help the school focus the development of new courses primarily towards those segments of the community that are most likely to generate students for the courses. In the field of market research, such segments of the community are called "marketing zones." Most markets contain segments of *green zones* (where most members of the population will participate), *yellow zones* (where some will participate if they're informed and convinced), and *red zones* (where very few will participate, regardless of recruitment efforts). An effective marketing strategy is geared towards the green and yellow zones. For example, typical high school students are "conditioned" to think of a community college or state university as the next logical step, yet there are many adult school offerings that can also benefit recent high school graduates. High school students need to be informed and reminded about the adult school alternative.

Beyond research into current community needs, market research must also anticipate community needs in the future. Adult schools should make special efforts to analyze the needs and interests of young adults and children in the community. They should link those needs and interests to adult school services by offering specialty courses and events like *"Summer Photo Camp for Kids."* Such offerings serve to cultivate new and "emerging markets." Adult schools can also create courses for emerging markets by bridging the gap between established courses and new ones. A class like *"Photoshop for Photographers"* is a good example of a class that links traditional course content (photography) with a new subject area (digital design).

In addition to recruitment efforts, the Marketing Coordinator must also develop and implement strategies for student retention. Any effective retention strategy begins with systematic outreach to current and former students. The first week of every term is a critical time for such outreach. The Marketing Coordinator must identify those courses that show marginal attendance in that first week. The Marketing Coordinator should lead staff in an effort to telephone all students who did attend the “endangered” classes and ask each of those students to bring someone else to class the following week. Staff should also contact former students of similar classes to make them aware of endangered course offerings and encourage them to enroll. Finally, teachers in other adult school classes should encourage their students to enroll in other classes as well, especially in classes that might close or that might not be offered again.

Throughout the year, the Marketing Coordinator should make a systematic effort to contact former students of failed classes to determine the key reasons that those classes failed. The input of former students is invaluable here, especially in cases where too few students attended certain classes even though the preliminary market research indicated demonstrable needs for those classes. Former students can help identify key reasons that particular classes failed. Whether the problem with a class was scheduling, the teacher, the course description, inadequate promotion, or something else, former students can help the school identify ways to improve a class so that it will succeed if it is offered again.

The Marketing Coordinator also can improve student retention by helping the adult school to implement a proactive policy concerning course registration fees. For example, according to one such policy, all students must register and pay fees before classes start. Alternatively, the school can require students to register and pay fees on the first day of classes. In either case, up-front payment of registration fees by students virtually ensures that they will continue attending classes.

Above all, the school should make it as fast and as easy as possible for prospective students to enroll in programs by accommodating a wide range of registration options such as cash, check, credit cards, debit cards, phone registration, mail-in registration, and on-line registration. Any methods that can make registration fast, efficient, effective, easy, and comfortable for new and continuing students will help tremendously in improving student enrollment. Such policies will inevitably cause some minor inconveniences for clerical staff, who will need to make refunds, change registrations, etc. However, such inconveniences are a small price to pay for the large benefits of increased student enrollment and retention.

## Advertising

An effective advertising campaign is a key component of any student recruitment effort. The Marketing Coordinator must develop two basic types of advertising for such a campaign. The first type, supplemental reinforcement advertising (name of adult school), enhances the school’s general image in the community. The second type, primary motivational advertising (“Stop and do it NOW!”), alerts potential students about specific course offerings. Both types of advertising should be directed towards all markets the school is seeking to influence.

A unifying theme and logo should appear in all the school’s advertising. A first-class *image* doesn’t have to be expensive to produce, but it must be clean, to-the-point, well-designed, and provide all the essential information. The school’s image should reinforce the message that its students are valued customers. It should remind the community of the school’s key strengths, like WASC accreditation, history in the community, and special community services. If possible, the school’s logo should be distributed throughout the community on practical items that prospective students can keep or share, like calendars, pencils, and note pads.

Every piece of advertising needs to perform three essential functions: It must *get the attention* of the viewer, *hold the attention* of the viewer long enough to convey its message, and *leave the intended impression* with the viewer. Especially when promoting new classes or programs, *major lead time* is a critical factor in successful advertising. If possible, "teasers" about upcoming new classes should be broadcast to relevant markets for several months in advance of the classes' start dates.

In addition to ample lead time, effective advertising campaigns also emphasize diverse placement. Promotional materials should be distributed to all relevant outlets, including libraries, specialty stores, key interest groups, etc. Judicious use of public service announcements and paid advertisements in local newspapers, radio stations, and public access television stations, is also worthwhile.

Finally, the very best sales tool an adult school can use is word-of-mouth advertising by satisfied customers. Special seminars and one-day events can boost this "sales force" tremendously. Many adults who are too busy to attend classes on a regular basis will attend single-session offerings. Afterwards, satisfied with their experience, they'll promote the general adult school program to others. Satisfied customers are always your best sales force because they make all of their recommendations *personal!*