

Adult Education Benchmarking Project

2012

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I. Executive Summary

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Adult Education Benchmarking Process was conducted as a means for IDWD to determine the current state of Adult Education in Indiana and use that information to prepare future system development plans and identify specific professional development activities for system administrators, teachers, and staff. The survey was conducted in person by IDWD's Adult Education Coordinators (AECs) with most of the state's adult education providers in the spring 2012. The Benchmarking process involved completing of a formal survey interview process and recording of data from those interviews into a comprehensive database. This process included:

- AECs interviewing a total of 69 Adult Education Providers across the State
- AECs talking with Regional Operators of WorkOne (Workforce Investment Act (WIA)) services and Adult Education Regional Consortia leadership in each of Indiana's eleven (11) Adult Education Regions
- Compiling the data into a database.

Information from the Benchmarking survey is presented in qualitative and quantitative formats. Within each topic/subject area, a number of recommendations are made, offering EDSI's recommended action for DWD, Adult Education Providers and EDSI itself to undertake in areas of Professional Development and the wider system development and coordination of Adult Education in Indiana. The report is divided in to four sections:

- IV. Executive Summary
- V. Summary of Recommendations
- VI. Dashboard
- VII. Report

The survey, analysis and report focused on key areas that were identified early in the project as areas that IDWD wished to focus on. These areas included:

- A. Instructional-Related Areas
- B. Management
- C. Professional Development

The authors recommend that the reader first review the Summary of recommendations starting on the next page and will provide the reader with a high level overview of the findings and recommendations. Detailed data and analysis for all findings and recommendations are found in the section V. Report.

II. Summary of Recommendations

A. Recommendations: Instructional-Related Areas

1. Curriculum and Instruction

The most important need that emerged from the Benchmarking project is guidance on classroom curricula. Teachers, provider staff and consortium staff all indicated they want guidance on identifying effective adult education curricula. Analysis of survey data indicates that technical assistance and professional development on instructional methods is also needed.

Overall recommendation: Facilitate regional innovation and diversity, but maintain common standards statewide.

Specific recommendations:

- Develop a framework for “Adult Education for Work” and standards to evaluate curricula.
- Create a “Curriculum Workgroup” to identify the curriculum standards and evaluate curricula.
- Clarify policy on E-Learning and Distance Learning, and provide E-Learning supports.
- Expand contextualized/integrated instruction.
- ICE Integration

2. Managed Enrollment; Student Assessment and Orientation

While the majority of providers said they use managed enrollment, they reported a variety of meanings of this concept. In terms of minimum grade level accepted, some providers believe they are legally or ethically bound to accept anyone, while others set a specific reading level, which varies by Region.

There also does not appear to be a common, statewide approach to student assessment. Also, a wide variety of materials and formats are used in the delivery of student orientations. The vast majority of materials and orientation content relates to program policies, rules, and processes. There is limited information about partner services and related programs (including WorkOnes) and very little information about programs available in addition to Adult Education, such as career paths, career planning or the range of options available to students once they improve their education levels or get their GED.

Overall recommendation: Facilitate regional innovation and diversity, but maintain common standards statewide.

Specific recommendations:

- Clarify the meaning of “managed enrollment”.
- Clarify the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) in terms of minimum grade level accepted into programs.
- Create a system-wide approach to assessments.
- Design a common approach to student orientations.
- Form an Orientation Team to design the common approach to orientations.

3. Learner Engagement, Persistence and Completion

In analyzing the benchmarking questions, it seems that some providers have interacted with peers around the State in developing similar regional or provider policies on enrollment, attendance, persistence and retention. Several regional consortia are in the midst of developing formal regional policies, while other providers seem to be “waiting” for DWD to disseminate statewide policies on these topics.

The benchmarking interviews indicate that providers want some guidance in these areas, and the vast majority wants a standard at the regional or even the State level. Several stated that they would rather have a policy in place, even if it isn’t exactly the policy they would wish for, simply to ensure that everyone is working on a level playing field. Some of this sentiment is related to performance measures and ensuring that performance is evaluated within the same model statewide.

There is a lack of consistency in the use of ICE across the state and within Regions. The proportion of providers currently using the ICE tools in assessing students’ overall career interests, aptitudes, values and needs appear to have limited expertise, and they would benefit from professional development in this area. The vast majority do not utilize the assessments at all.

Overall Recommendation: Many providers feel that there should be technological methods of co-case management and student/customer tracking between the Adult Education and WorkOne systems.

Specific Recommendations:

- Develop policies and supportive practices on attendance, persistence and retention at the regional level.
- Provide training on the ICE tool so students will be better oriented to career goals from the start of their AE experience.
- Clarify organizational roles regarding career counseling and case management.
- Explore methods of providing shared access to the Adult Education InTERS student data system and WorkOne TrackOne case management system.

4. Transition to Postsecondary Education/Training and Employment

The analysis of the benchmark data identified a lack of understanding among the partners of their roles in the workforce development systems, as well as the services and programs available through each of the partners. Enabling students to transition to postsecondary education or training and to employment is the product of the collective input of key partners, including the WorkOnes, Community Colleges, and businesses, collaborating with the AE providers in the AE system.

Overall Recommendation: Clarify the roles of the partners in the workforce development systems and increase business engagement by providing technical assistance to AE Providers on how to better engage businesses to increase job placements through apprenticeships, OJTs, Work Experience, and Internship opportunities.

Specific Recommendations:

- Clarify WorkOne functions and intended outputs; identify barriers to and incentives for collaboration.
- Clarify community college functions and intended results; identify collaboration barriers and incentives.
- Formalize the transition processes.
- Enhance supports for credential attainment.
- Develop relationships with a small number of businesses in key industries that have labor shortages and design workplace-based courses.
- Develop reading, math and workplace skills curricula that are contextualized to the demand occupations at participating businesses.

5. WorkINDiana

Based on interviews, there seems to be universal commitment to the WorkINDiana process, which is very positive for a program that remains relatively new. However, progress remains slow at moving students into the WorkINDiana programs that have been developed. Actual DWD data on the program will be superior to the self-reports that were given by AECs and ROs in the Benchmarking interviews, but based on these, as few as zero (in five Regions) and only as many as ten (in Region 4) students began WorkINDiana in the month, February 2012, when the Benchmarking interviews were conducted.

At the time of the survey, some programs were in place and moving students through the programs, while others were “on the books” but with few students. About half of the Regions reported that they had developed a full Pathway for each program, developing the several steps of coursework and employment that students/customers may progress through within their targeted industry. In these and other regions, AECs and Regional Operators report that they still need to do a great deal to improve business and industry involvement and input into

curricula and solidify the details of the pathways, and in many areas they state that more needs to be done on marketing the programs. Some barriers continue to exist in terms of moving students through WorkINdiana. Many of these are to be expected of a new program, but warrant further attention.

Overall Recommendation: Continue the growth and expansion of the WorkINdiana program.

Specific Recommendations:

- Continue to improve the processes for student application and enrollment into WorkINdiana and the customer flow of the programs.
- Standardize processes for monitoring/evaluating WorkINdiana.
- Make work a goal of WorkINdiana.

6. Corrections

The state Department of Corrections contributes approximately \$7.5M to the AE system, which is an amount nearly equal the amount provided by WIA Title II funding (\$10M). Thus, the Corrections system can be a significant partner with Adult Education, but real potential appears unrealized, and a number of Providers reported significant difficulties working with the State corrections department.

Overall Recommendation: Continue to seek and develop partnership opportunities with the state Department of Corrections.

Specific Recommendations:

- Meet with Corrections leadership to identify methods to improve AE for offenders and ex-offenders.
- Assess how the AE programs are working now: program goals; referrals and tracking; class attendance; student outcomes, etc.
- Explore the possibility of piloting a WorkINdiana program within 1-2 corrections facilities.

B. Recommendations: Management

1. Organizational Management and Coordination

Based on the Benchmarking survey of Adult Education Providers as well as WorkOne Regional Operators, Adult Education Regional Consortia and Adult Education Coordinators, the picture on coordination is varied across the State. One of the most important aspects of coordination programmatically is referral and on this function, activity is quite uneven. There appears to be a significant need to improve and systematize the referral process.

Overall Recommendation: Promote the coordination of programs and shared data between Adult Education and WorkOne programs.

Specific Recommendations:

- Identify barriers to and incentives for WorkOne – AE Coordination
- Set up a structure and process for regular Adult Education/WorkOne staff interactions
- Improve the referral process; increase referrals:
 - Investigate systemic incentives and disincentives for referral between AE and WorkOnes.
 - Require reporting and tracking of referrals between AE and WorkOne.
 - Develop standard referral forms for referrals from WorkOne to Adult Education and from Adult Education to WorkOne.
 - Designate Adult Education/WorkOne staff leads on referral tracking.
- Continue strong recruiting processes and community partnerships
- Increase Co-Location
- Explore methods of providing shared access to the Adult Education InTERS student data system and WorkOne TrackOne case management system.

2. Program Staffing and Capacity Management

The capacity of the Adult Education programs across the state varies widely, in terms of numbers, times and formats whereby classes are offered. Student to teacher ratios vary from 20 to 25+ down to less than 15 per teacher. Providers offer a wide range of total hours during the week. Some Programs offer multiple classes concurrently; 15 Providers have classes operating for greater than 40 hours per week, but otherwise, programs include as few as seven hours (3 Providers with less than 10 per week).

The Benchmarking process did not explore teacher counts, full-time/part-time teacher ratios, or teacher retention. However, comments by providers suggest that in many regions there is a challenge of teacher turnover, attracting full-time teachers and teachers able to teach math at higher levels. This could be a valuable area to explore more deeply for future benchmarking.

Several providers noted that they know there are more potential students in their communities needing assistance, and many specifically mentioned things like “if I had two more teachers, I could do...” more services and or more specialized programs to meet student needs. It is not “news” that there are not enough services to go around, but capacity needs to be enhanced in order to begin to make a more significant impact on the 930,000 Indiana residents who need some level of Adult Education services.

Overall Recommendation: Develop programs to help close the gap between limited instructional capacity and excess physical capacity.

Specific Recommendations:

- Work with Providers who have gaps between “physical capacity” and “instructional capacity” to expand overall system capacity.
- Consider weekend, off-hour and workplace-based classes.
- Further analyze schedules to explore ways to expand capacity.

C. Recommendations: Professional Development

Across Providers, there were many comments regarding a need for support for Professional Development. In addition to observations and recommendations regarding curriculum development, there were many comments with regard to the need for broad tools and resources to help teachers, many of whom come from public school settings and are less experienced in teaching Adults, to do the best possible job in Adult Education.

Overall Recommendation: Overall Recommendation: Offer more, and more structured, Professional Development. Develop and implement a system of professional development for adult education administrators and teachers.

Specific Recommendations:

Based on discussions between DWD and EDSI and insights from the Benchmarking process, the following activities should be pursued regarding Professional Development:

- Hold Adult Education Directors’ Meetings on a regular basis in order to more effectively communicate policy and facilitate peer learning.
- Set up a framework for an Annual or Bi-Annual Adult Education Conference with multiple concurrent workshops and opportunities for peer learning. Initial subject matter should be developed based on direction from DWD leadership and findings in this report.
- Offer more structured Professional Development.
- Develop a New Teacher Handbook.
- Engage administrators and teachers to identify specific professional development needs.
- Re-engage teacher mentoring.

III. Report and Findings

Adult Education in Indiana

Adult education is a critical need in Indiana. As cited in a recent Chamber of Commerce report, Indiana's adult population "faces continuing challenges as the result of both a dramatically changing economy and an educational system that has demanded far too little for far too long." Specifically, "more than 930,000 Hoosiers – nearly a third of our entire workforce – lack even the most basic skills to thrive in today's economy."¹ The Chamber's definition of lacking basic skills here is based on lacking a high school diploma and/or having no post-secondary education, and considers some common results of these situations, such as low wages. The skill deficit and its impact in Indiana are extreme, with 524,000 individuals lacking a high school diploma and 226,000 of these currently earning less than a living wage. Much must be done to begin to address these shortcomings, and Indiana has focused on making major improvements to its Adult Education services as one method of working to improve these dire statistics.

Indiana's Adult Education system is delivered as Title II of the Workforce Investment Act and includes services such as basic skills (math/reading), GED preparation, literacy, and related skills necessary to help adults without sufficient basic skills (and often lacking a high school diploma) for the purposes of employment, reemployment or enhanced employment. In Indiana, Adult Education has operated under the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) since April 2011 when legislation passed that transitioned the program from the Department of Education to DWD.

Under the Department of Workforce Development, the Mission for the Division of Adult Education is:

To ensure delivery of foundational skills development, career pathways, and academic and career counseling services to adults and out-of-school youth for the purposes of employment, reemployment, or enhanced employment.

Relatedly, one of the expected outcomes of this survey is the identification of Professional Development priorities for adult education administrators, teachers, and staff. Ultimately, the Professional Development project's goal is to deliver a framework and curriculum of professional development training and related activities to give adult education providers the tools and support necessary to realize the system's mission; and to provide training, tools and support for regional consortia, adult education providers and teachers to develop an Adult Education system that has the capacity to achieve statewide goals quickly and efficiently.

By bringing together Adult Education and Workforce Development, Indiana is at the cutting edge nationally, with only a handful of other states (including several of the other Midwest

¹ Indiana Chamber of Commerce, *Indiana Vision 2025: A Plan for Hoosier Prosperity*, December 2011, p.10.

region states involved in the Joyce Foundation's Shifting Gears Initiative, as well as Texas, Maryland and Washington, all with impressive systems in place) integrating these services within a common state agency or implementing other strong coordination. In many states, while some nonprofits may operate both workforce and adult education programs, the separate state agencies overseeing the separate programs provide little to no guidance or support for integrating these programs.

Purpose of the Project

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Adult Education Benchmarking Process began as a means for DWD, working with consultant EDSI, Inc., to determine the current state of Adult Education in Indiana and use that information to prepare future system development plans and identify specific professional development activities for system administrators, teachers, and staff. EDSI designed a “Benchmarking” survey for all Indiana Adult Education Providers and other key system service providers. The survey was conducted in Spring 2012 by Adult Education Coordinators and representatives of EDSI. This report presents findings from the Benchmarking Survey and EDSI’s recommendations for DWD and the Adult Education system.

Benchmark Process Design

The Benchmarking process involved delivery, by DWD’s Adult Education Coordinators (AECs) and representatives of EDSI, of a formal survey interview process, and recording of data from those interviews into a comprehensive database:

- AECs, with EDSI’s support in a portion of interviews, spoke with a total of 69 Adult Education Providers across the State, delivering the full Benchmarking survey with over 75 unique questions.
- AECs talked with Regional Operators of WorkOne (Workforce Investment Act (WIA)) services and Adult Education Regional Consortia leadership in each of Indiana’s eleven (11) Adult Education Regions, discussing a subset of questions from the full Benchmarking database.
- AECs made direct responses to some key questions, summarizing the situation within the Regions they are tasked with coordinating, and giving the “big picture” perspective of the state of Adult Education in their regions.

Interviews were conducted in person during January to March 2012 with the Adult Education Providers, and in-person or by phone with the Regional Operators and Consortia representatives. Data was compiled by EDSI during April-May 2012, presented in initial form to DWD staff in late April 2012 and further developed into a Draft Report presented to DWD in June 2012. This document is the Final Report to DWD on the 2012 Benchmarking Survey.

The benchmarking process is expected to expand and become an annual process, in which DWD, the Regional Consortia, Adult Education Providers across Indiana, and EDSI will consider a

variety of key information about the delivery of services across the state, compare data over time, and use that data to guide ongoing Professional Development and system development activities.

Content of Report

Information from the Benchmarking survey is presented in qualitative and quantitative formats within each of the topic categories. For most topics, a number of specific questions within the Benchmarking surveys provide insights into the situation across Indiana, and the data includes both quantitative counts of the responses from Providers statewide (and within each Region) on given yes/no or drop-down menu questions, as well as further qualitative narrative responses to open-ended questions as well as observations made by EDSI and the DWD Adult Education Coordinators during the visits. The data, observations and anecdotal comments are provided in some detail.

The quantitative and qualitative data from the Benchmarking interviews are considered in light of national best practices in Adult Education and additional insights from the field. Within each topic/subject area, a number of recommendations are made, offering EDSI's recommended action for DWD, Adult Education Providers and EDSI itself to undertake in areas of Professional Development and the wider system development and coordination of Adult Education in Indiana.

A. Findings: Instructional-Related Areas

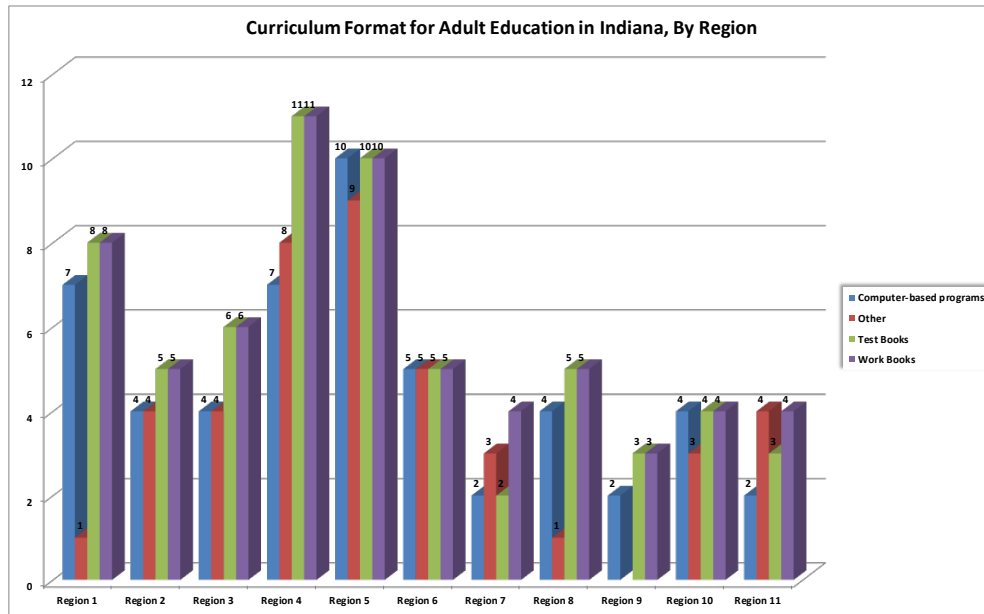
1. Curriculum and Instruction

The top need that emerged from the Benchmarking project is guidance on curricula. Teachers, Provider staff and consortium staff said they want guidance on identifying the most effective curricula. Analysis of survey data also indicates that technical assistance and professional development on instructional methods is needed.

Curriculum Used by Adult Education Providers

Across Indiana, Providers use a relatively wide variety of tools in delivering their curricula. Providers were asked what methods they use for their adult education curricula – Computer-Based Programs; Text Books; Work Books or Other. Responses varied by Region; see Figure 1 below. For example, use of Computer-Based Programs ranged from 40% of Providers in Region 7 to 100% of Providers in Regions 1 and 6. But some Providers in all regions use Computer-based programs. Use of WorkBooks is somewhat more prevalent, ranging from 63% of Providers in Region 5 to 100% of Providers in Regions 1, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 11.

Figure 1



Providers report using as many as five or six different curricula, with 59 of 69 Providers using three or more different curricula tools/materials and 7 using two different ones. A significant percentage of Adult Education Providers utilize either the Steck-Vaughn (46%) or McGraw Hill (33%) standard published Adult Education curricula. Twenty-four percent use the GED Online curricula and 24% use the ITTS online tool (also published by McGraw Hill). Ten percent of Providers utilize the online Plato curriculum tool.

Of greatest note in considering the curricula used by Providers are two factors. First, over 40% of Providers use some other published curricula, beyond those above, and there are almost as many different curricula used as Providers. Second, approximately 20% of Providers use curricula developed independently by teachers, including using newspapers, novels, online media and a variety of other materials collected over time by the teachers, but not from any published or proven source. This diversity reflects the creativity of the teachers and Providers. But it can be inefficient in terms of increasing time and effort across the system of Providers searching out curricula and individual teachers creating their own curriculum from scratch. And the latter could present a risk of using poor and un-proven tools. Diversity in curricula is not a bad thing in and of itself. However, teachers themselves said they want help in identifying “best practices”. Before identifying “best practice” curricula, the AE system and DWD must agree on criteria by which to judge “the best”.

Instructional Theories/Frameworks

In order to understand what educational theories, if any, guide the development and use of curricula, the survey asked the Adult Education Providers, “Are teaching theories used in delivery of curriculum?” and “If yes, what theories and strategies are used?”

DWD considers it important that Adult Education Providers utilize any theoretical approach from among the many frameworks available, such as providing instruction across all three spectra on the “VAK” (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic/Tactile) model. The Department of Workforce Development has focused significant attention to crafting its educational/training programs as well as staff professional development on reaching increasing levels of effort on Bloom’s Taxonomy of learning.

All but two Providers responded that they do utilize teaching theories in their curriculum. However, from analysis of the data and answers to the open-ended question of what teaching theories or strategies are used it appears that there is limited use of theories of adult education and no consensus about or consistent use of particular theories. Only about 40% (27 of 69) of Providers cited an educational theory that guides their curriculum development or instruction. No respondent said they use Bloom’s Taxonomy and in only about 20% of Providers is it evident that the higher levels of the Taxonomy (Analyzing, Evaluating or Creating) are reached, while elsewhere here, and in the data on what curriculum materials are used, instruction seems to be very much at the Understanding and Applying levels. Multiple Providers (particularly several respondents in Regions 1, 4, 7), do not see value or possibility of interactive or “tactile” learning, learning for auditory learners, or other unique models or teaching at a higher level of “Bloom’s Taxonomy.” There is some evidence that individual instructors/teachers utilize specific theories in the classroom, but in many cases even their supervisors are not fully aware of which ones or to what degree, and there is limited coordination of these efforts within regions and no coordination across regions. Thus, there does not appear to be any particular framework or theory of adult education that has gained consensus across or wide use in the state’s AE system.

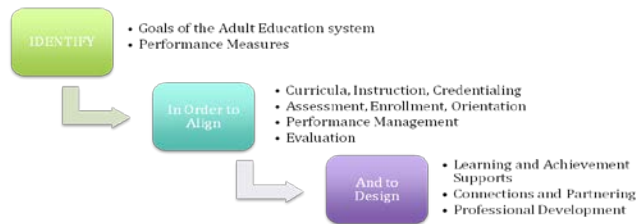
Framework for Adult Education

We recommend that a framework be created, based on the AE system’s goals, and that curriculum standards related on those goals be identified or created.

Constructing an explicit framework for the Adult Education program is important because it can be a way to align day-to-day actions in the classroom with desired system outputs. Curriculum standards are a part of that framework. The “Equipped for the Future” framework, developed by the National Institute for Literacy notes: Research indicates that standards are a powerful tool to improve results because they make explicit what the goals of instruction should be and therefore provide a way to align curriculum, instruction, assessment and accountability.² We believe this is sound guidance, and, based on the findings from the Benchmark study would add that the alignment should also include: “learning and achievement supports and services”, “connections and partnerships,” and Professional Development.

² Equipped for the Future, Background and History, <http://eff.cls.utk.edu/fundamentals/about.htm>

We offer the following as a potential framework for DWD's Adult Education system:



Curriculum Standards

Based on discussions as part of the Benchmarking process, as noted above, most teachers seem to have built curriculum organically over time, using tools and resources at their disposal and responding to student needs, but without certainty of what works and what is proven, or how the curricula apply to overall Adult Education goals. Many Providers acknowledged that they don't like the current situation in which there is limited guidance and each Provider (or even each Teacher) develops their own curriculum and accesses their own materials. Those interviewed report wanting more guidance, such as a statewide "best/approved curriculum materials" menu or samples of high-quality materials or a framework to build upon. There was a strong suggestion for a working-group to gather all of the curricular materials used across Providers, review them, review others that may exist outside Indiana and then rank or evaluate them to provide a menu of recommended resources.

We recommend that such identification of "best practices" curriculum materials be done within the above framework.

Within Adult Education is a standards-based reform movement, and a number of curriculum content standards have been developed. Many of these can be found at:

<http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/>

While curriculum content standards may be "best practice", the standards in existence are often quite extensive and their adoption or adaptation could require an intensive and lengthy process of consensus building. It is not within the purview of the Benchmarking study to recommend one or another set of curriculum content standards. However, identifying and adopting curriculum standards could be done by a "Curriculum Workgroup", as described in Recommendation 1.b below.

There is an alternative, which could be simpler: adopting "Quality Elements", such as those provided in the context of "Adult Education for Work", a concept and approach developed by the Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy and the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). Titled "Background and Supporting Evidence for Adult Education for

Work”, the NCEE report lays out seven Focus Areas and “Quality Elements within each, for designing an adult education system oriented toward work as a goal.

This philosophy seems consistent with the intent of Indiana to re-direct WIA Title II Adult Education programs toward a greater orientation to work-related outcomes, while acknowledging that adult education has other goals. The National Center on Education and the Economy’s publication, “Guide to Adult Education for Work; Transforming Adult Education to Grow a Skilled Workforce” describes examples of places where these approaches have been implemented.

We would add that another element is that curricula align with Indiana’s Common Core Standards³ for education as well as the federal core measures for adult education under WIA Title II. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a U.S. education initiative that seeks to bring state curricula into alignment with each other by following the principles of standards-based education reform. The initiative is sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The standards are designed to be relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that are needed for success in college and careers.

Curriculum Workgroup

Stakeholders should be engaged in identifying and adopting standards by which to evaluate curricula. Toward this end, we recommend formation of a Statewide “Curriculum Workgroup”. This would be a committee of five to ten Provider staff (teachers and administrators) identified as having strong curriculum or capacity to explore new models, working together with DWD staff. A process and structure for this work would need to be created. This group would work for 3-6 months to collect best practices from inside and outside Indiana to come up with a consensus on which appear to be most effective and which will support the goals of an adult education for work system. The Curriculum Workgroup, as part of its charter, should identify instructional methods that are particularly well-suited to prepare students for getting and keeping a job. These include instructional methods such as project-based learning and other forms of learning-by-doing and team-based learning.

We recommend that through the Curriculum Workgroup, DWD and AE leadership research, identify, adopt and implement a set of criteria before gathering and evaluating curricula. These criteria should embody DWD’s priorities, such as accelerating learning and orienting curricula towards post-secondary credential attainment and effective preparation for work.

³ Common Core State Standard (CCSS) for Mathematics and English/Language Arts adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education in August, 2010.

E-Learning and Technology in Instruction

The use of technology has become a critical factor in adult education, but the issues around technology use and the reasons technology is important sometimes get conflated. Technology is important in two ways:

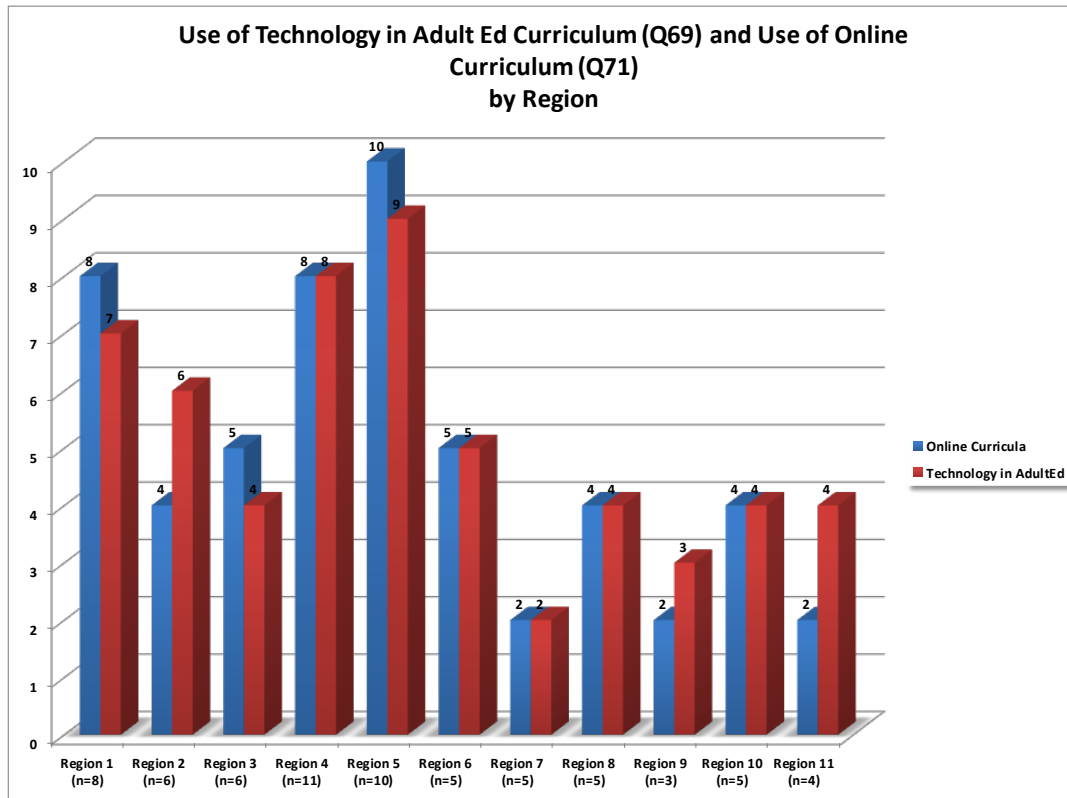
- for the AE system to gain efficiencies, expand access, accelerate learning;
- for learners to teach technology use to students.

Following is an analysis of survey responses related to technology use. Our recommendations will address technology use related to these two principal goals of using technology in instruction.

E-Learning Tools

Providers use a variety of online curriculum tools. 56 of 68 responding Providers report using technological solutions in some way (Question 69). Fifty-four Providers report offering online curricula of some sort (Question 71), although the extent varies significantly by Region. See Figure 2.

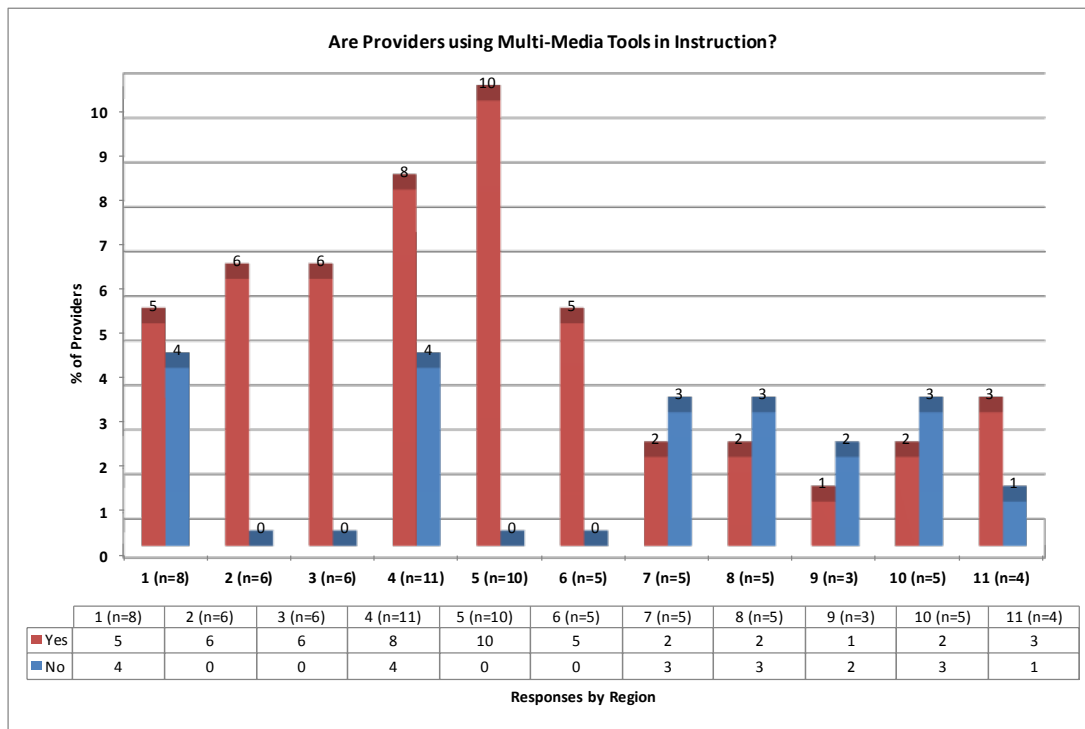
Figure 2



The majority of Providers (28) use the ITTS curriculum, while significant minorities of 13 use the Plato tool and four use My Foundations Lab. It is interesting to note that those who use Plato generally use it exclusively (do not use any other online tools). Forty-two providers use some “other” tool. In the initial Benchmarking, we did not collect data on what this “Other” category is in this question, though we did ask about curricula in Questions 68 and 68.1. Based on responses to Question 68 on what curricula are used in general, we can gather that the main online tools beyond ITTS, Plato and My Foundations Lab include the “Achieving TABE Success” and Contemporary product lines by McGraw Hill, GED Online, WIN, Rosetta Stone, Kaplan GED Prep, Khan Academy, and a few other products used by only one or two Providers.

A significant portion of Providers utilize multimedia tools in delivering Adult Education services. About two-thirds (42 Providers) use DVDs of various types in the classroom, with (numbers overlap) 23 using VCR tapes, 22 using YouTube videos and 30 using “other” methods (Question 73). Unfortunately, responses of “Other” did not have space in the initial Benchmarking survey to provide further data, though this would be preferable in a future iteration. Use of multimedia tools varies significantly by Region as depicted in the following chart, Figure 3.

Figure 3: Use of multimedia tools in instruction



Distance Learning

There is interest in moving to distance learning by DWD and by many Providers, with a number of those who do not provide it wanting to explore its use, and many who provide it wanting to expand their programs. The interest in Distance Learning is both as a means of serving more

individuals than instructional capacity allows, and also in order to reach individuals for whom travel to Adult Education Provider sites is difficult or is a barrier to participation. It is also thought that distance learning can help to accelerate learning. Of note, the current delivery method of curriculum (students doing a great amount of solitary work at computers within the classroom) lends itself well to distance learning as it is essentially that, only with the students all physically in the same space rather than at home or in their own locations.

The Adult Education Providers are almost equally split in terms of their use of Distance Learning as part of their curricula. Thirty-five Providers report, in Question 61 of the Benchmarking survey, that they utilize Distance Learning, while 33 report that they do not utilize Distance Learning. To further dramatize the lack of any clear trend across Indiana, the data also reflects that most Regions are also evenly split with only three Regions having a strong trend one way or the other, with Regions 6 and 10 having most Providers offering Distance Learning, and Region 7 having most Providers not offering it. The Providers who provide Distance Learning are also relatively evenly split on their reasons for doing so or the value of it. Thirteen Providers stated that the main impact is that it can expand capacity, by not having as many students in the classroom at a given time since some are always off-site doing Distance Learning. Nine Providers reported the value in terms of helping reach students who are not always able to come to the Provider site, thus improving access, learning time and outcomes for those students. Two Providers focused on funding (an alternate perspective on capacity), noting that you can have fewer teachers and serve the same numbers more affordably by using Distance Learning. Consider the two main types of goals of technology use in adult education:

- to gain efficiencies, expand access, accelerate learning
- to teach technology use to learners.

A study by the National Center on Education and the Economy notes that Adult Education programs focused on work goals should use technology in the classroom as “a key tool to engage students in their own learning, develop independent/self-directed learning/work skills, and where appropriate expand educational offerings through distance learning.” Use of instructional technology is not simply an efficient method of delivering curricula, but contributes to work readiness and students’ ability to work independently in work settings and improved problem solving skills.⁴ A 2002 Jobs for the Future study found that the most effective e-learning technologies are built in support of and in conjunction with classroom learning. As the JFF study suggests, “commonly held assumptions about e-learning continue to focus on its value as an add-on or supplement to traditional education, rather than on the opportunity e-learning offers to consider new environments, structures, and ways of learning.”⁵

⁴ National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), “Background and Supporting Evidence for Adult Education for Work: Background Paper for One Step Forward Initiative,” 2009.

⁵ McCain, Mary, Jobs for the Future, “Leapfrogging Over the Status Quo: E-Learning and the Challenge of Adult Literacy,” p.5. <http://www.jff.org/publications/education/leapfrogging-over-status-quo-e-learning-/216>

Tools that employ multi-media, visual and audio text and are customized to the needs of given sub-groups of learners (learning levels) have proven to be the most successful. Additionally, efforts that integrate technology education are critical, as many adult learners not only lack basic skills but also lack technology experience and expertise, so simply giving them a web link and expecting them to go it alone does more harm than good. E-learning tools should also build networks among students to facilitate peer learning and peer support.

There is a perceived tension among Providers between expanding use of online tools and expanding to higher levels of learning on Bloom or related scales. “Evaluating” and “Creating” are perceived as more difficult in an online environment. Thus, as part of the Curriculum Workgroup an exploration should be done of the resources available for cutting-edge online technology and its use in furthering learning objectives of Adult Education students, particularly in relation to the goals of “adult education for work”.

Consider what level of Distance Learning is desired for the purposes of expansion and increasing access, and provide Professional Development, tools and system coordination to expand to that level. A caution regarding Distance Learning: recognize that many students may lack good access to high speed Internet that is necessary for such online education. Distance Learning may be most useful in a workplace-based learning setting.

Electronic Communication

A final note on technology relates to Providers and teachers’ use of online communication with students. A significant portion (40 of 69) utilize email in communicating with students, either in groups and/or individually (Question 70). However, only nine Providers utilize online discussion groups or list-serve technology in communicating with their students. This may reflect the lack of technological skills or online access by students in the home, lack of technological savvy among teachers or other factors, but is significant in considering options for the future of the Adult Education system. As noted above, technology in Adult Education is more than simply a tool to be utilized, but is a significant form and content of education itself. Literacy and basic skills are fast becoming identical with computer literacy and basic online communication skills. Thus identifying ways to teach these skills in the context of teaching basic reading skills to adult learners should be a focus of future efforts.

Group Work

Nearly all Providers (64 of 69 respondents) utilize small group work in delivery of curriculum (Question 76.1).⁶ In interview discussions, however, multiple Providers (particularly in Regions 1, 4, 7), stated that they do not see value or possibility of working in groups based on the nature of the material being presented. When asked how these groups are formed, many

⁶ The narrative responses to Question 76.1, “Does instruction occur in groups, and if yes, who forms the group? (students or teacher) Is there commonality such as education level among group members?” are enlightening.

Providers suggest that the teachers will occasionally break students out into groups to work on a given part of the curriculum or a given topic, and that these groups are usually formed based on homogeneous groupings, with students at the same levels working together in most cases. 32 of the Providers report forming homogeneous groups while only eleven report forming heterogeneous groups that might result in peer teaching, which, by our understanding, is one of the best ways to reach higher levels on the Bloom Taxonomy, when a person can demonstrate their mastery of a subject by teaching it to others. Some Providers (22) report forming groups by subject matter, when working on particular content during the course of the curriculum.

2. Managed Enrollment, Student Assessment and Orientation

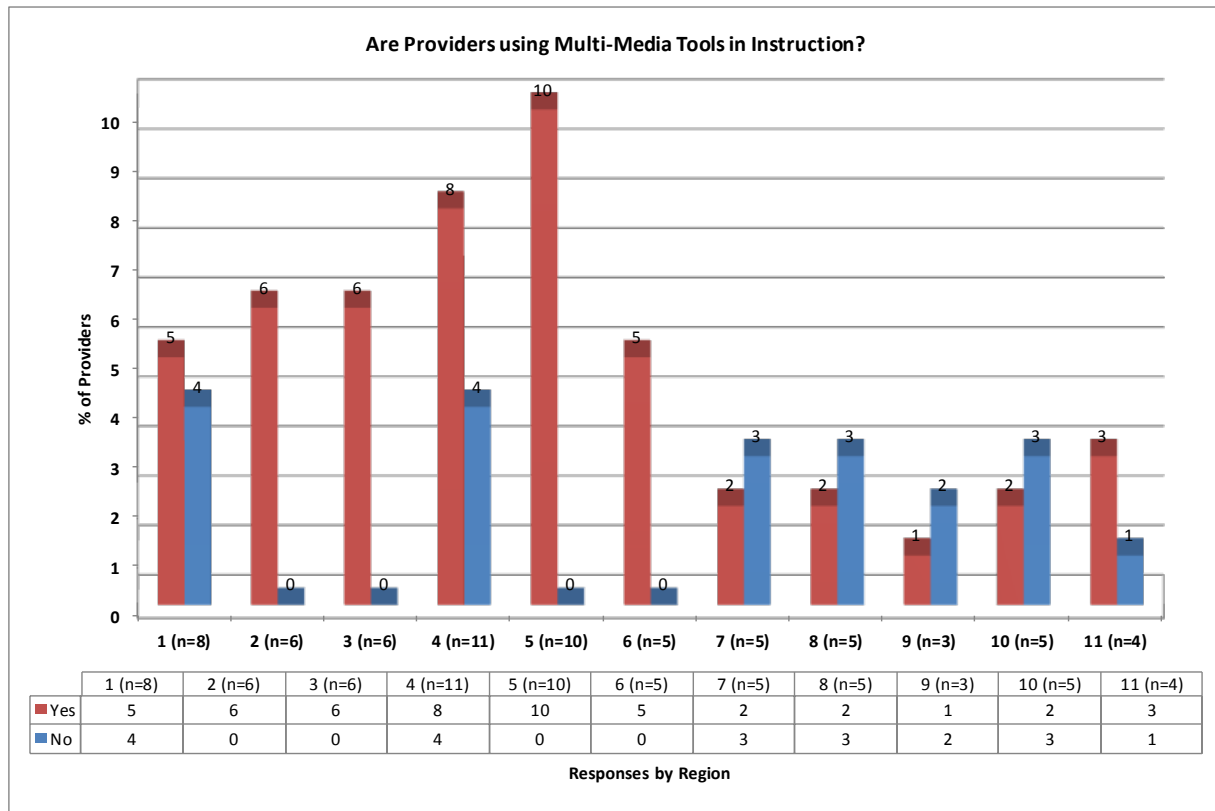
Managed Enrollment

DWD considers it important for providers to “manage” enrollment and has begun to define this, though providers report seeking more clarity in terms of this definition. In general, managed enrollment is defined in terms of building cohorts, starting groups of students at regular intervals, holding class for set course durations, and requiring that students formally re-enroll in a subsequent class session (rather than remaining “active” indefinitely), and requiring a maximum number of absences in order to stay enrolled.⁷ But Providers reported a variety of concepts for “managed enrollment”.

As shown in the “Enrollment Policies: All Providers” chart below, the majority of Providers (44 of 68 responding) use Managed Enrollment, while a smaller number (12) use a combination of Managed and other methods. A smaller number – 10 Providers – use only Open enrollment. Two Providers responded that they use some “other” method of enrollment (which, if unexplained, may have also been a hybrid approach).

⁷ Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education, “Managed Enrollment: An Opportunity to Reinvigorate the Adult Basic Education Experience,” 2006, p.3.

Figure 4

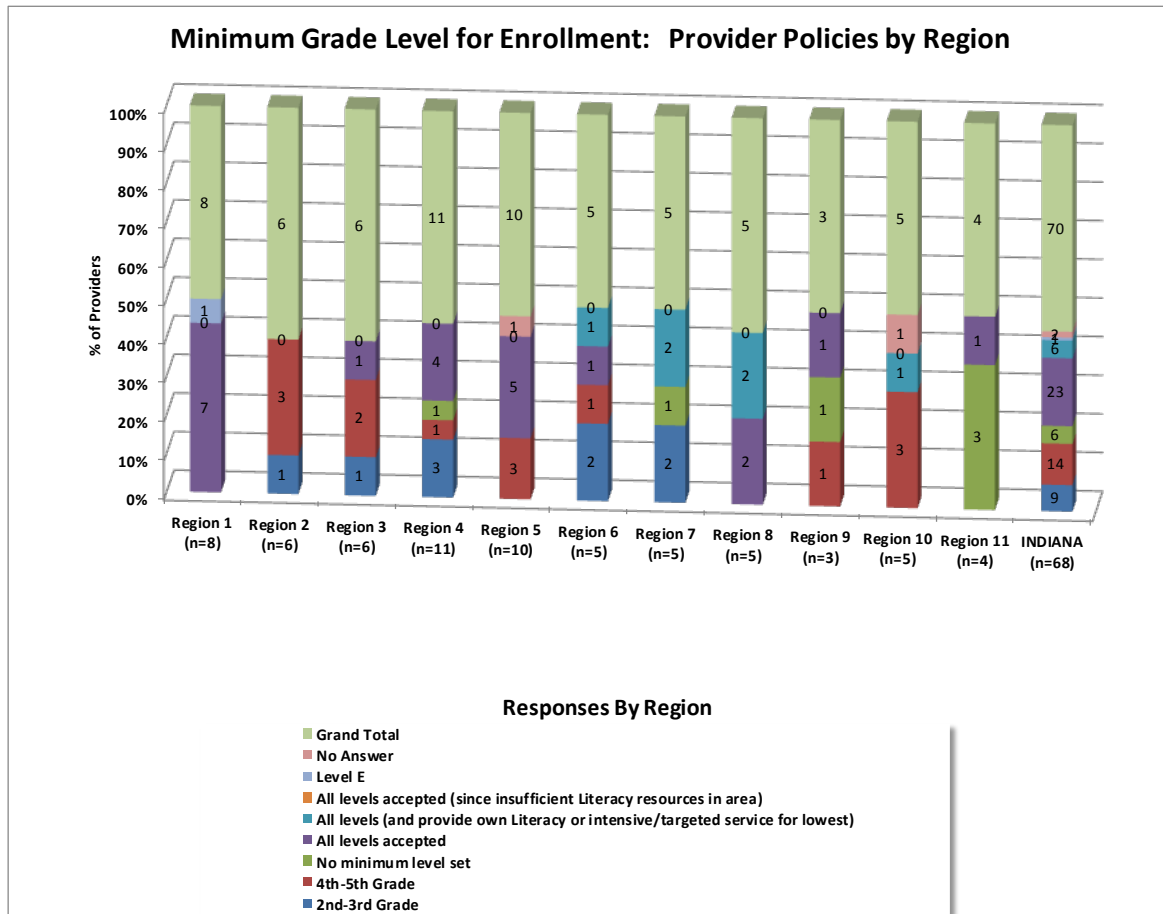


All Regions report using Managed Enrollment to some extent and two Regions use Managed enrollment exclusively, as show in the chart below – “How is Enrollment Conducted?”

Minimum Grade Level for Program

When asked about the minimum grade level of students they will accept for entry into the Adult Education program, Providers surfaced another Policy issue of note. This issue relates to the philosophy of Adult Education, access to other pre-Adult Education services such as community Literacy partners, as well as program goals. Some Providers noted in their comments that they are legally or ethically bound to accept “anyone” into the program, with six Providers noting that they also have internal Literacy services within their organization and so make a seamless transition between the two programs and nine Providers stating that no Literacy program is available in their community (or within reasonable distances for their student population to travel) and so they accept anyone and work with them as needed. Others set a specific level of reading ability below which they will instead make a referral to a Literacy provider, with 9 setting that level at the 2nd or 3rd grade reading level and 14 setting at the 4th or 5th grade level.

Figure 5: Minimum TABE Level accepted (Q66)



The following chart in Figure 6 breaks out the responses by Region, and shows significant variation of policies among Regions and within most Regions. One Region – Region 4 – has five different policies in effect.

Educational Attainment Assessment

Student assessment is a critical element in enrollment. As of now, however, there does not appear to be a common, statewide approach to student assessment. All providers use the TABE test, two thirds (41) of using the online version, and a portion of these (13 Providers) also use the career guidance Indiana Career Explorer (ICE) assessment tools online for students. The use of ICE is discussed in the section below on **career counseling/case management**.

Within the scope of assessments, a number of Providers commented on a challenge that sometimes arises, in terms of identifying or serving customers with learning disabilities. Many did not know what resources exist to diagnose learning disabilities (dyslexia, others) among Adult Ed students, and several very clearly saw this as not their role, noting that they do not have the capacity or funding to do this. A few suggested that individuals can go to other

providers of this service directly, but acknowledged that it is likely more expensive than many students can afford, and some were not aware of who those providers are. One Provider stated that “We aren’t special education.” But within an Adult Education population likely including many individuals with learning disabilities, the question remains, who does this and how can it be better linked to the AE system?

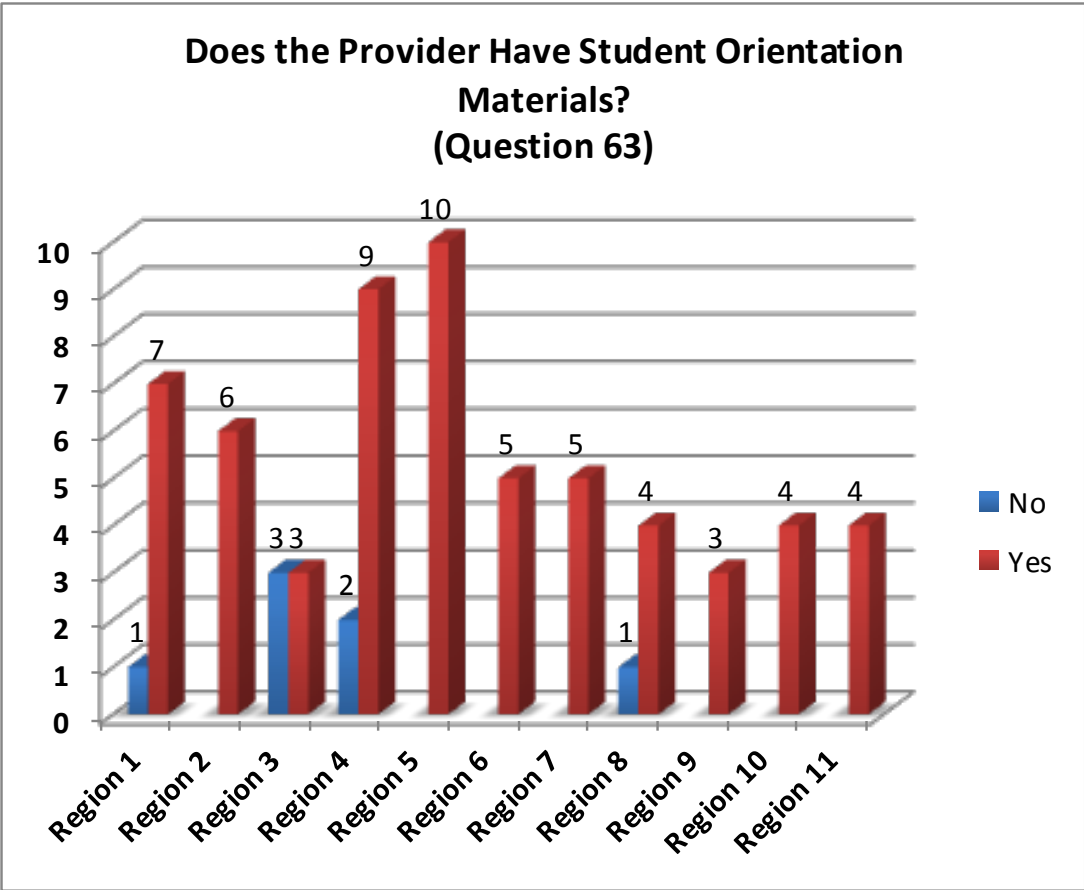
System-wide Approach to Assessment

DWD can help ensure consistency in adult education assessments and that the assessment tools used are consistent with the intended outcome of employment. A Working Group that includes representatives from the Work Ones and Adult Education could focus on improving the Assessment process, in conjunction with WorkOne (for dual-enrolled students). Some models exist in various states, and these could be adapted to suit Indiana’s needs. One example of this type of assessment is CASAS, (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) in use among a number of workforce development and AE systems. AE professionals in Indiana’s AE system could evaluate its suitability for Indiana’s needs. Training on assessments should be included as part of the Professional Development agenda.

Within the examination of alternative assessment models, it will be important for DWD to clarify to Providers their role in assessing, or partnering with existing services to assess, and diagnosing students’ learning disabilities. If this is not the role of the Adult Education system, then developing a referral process and helping students who may have such disabilities get in touch with needed services will be beneficial to outcomes.

Student Orientation

There is a wide variety of materials used and formats of delivery of student orientations. The vast majority of Providers (60 of 68 responding) have some form of orientation for new students. In some cases this is a binder or folder of materials that is provided to each student upon registration. In other cases it is a standard slide presentation or outline of remarks made by an administrator or teacher during the first day or class for a given cohort. Of note, the vast majority of materials and Orientation content relates to program policies, rules, processes and other bureaucratic elements of the program, and there is less information about partner services and related programs (including WorkOne) and very limited information about the future after Adult Education, such as career paths, career planning or the range of options available to students once they improve their levels or get their GED.



Providers were asked about student orientation: “Are student related policies included? Are student expectations included? Are all materials covered during a student's orientation?” The variance, in terms of how the information is delivered, who delivers, what information is included, etc., is striking.

When asked about their Orientation materials and processes, Providers across the board recommended that a process be developed for DWD, Consortia and Providers to work together to develop standardized, and/or “best practices” across the state for student orientation.

Additionally, numerous Providers, and interviewed WorkOne Regional Operators suggested that WorkOne should always have a representative at Adult Education orientations to explain their system and programs (including available skills training and WorkINdiana programming) and to begin possible cross-program referral relationships early in the process with each student.

Approach to Student Orientations

The NCEE Adult Education for Work paper notes that “At present, most Adult Education programs provide only short and unsystematic orientation services to students, and those services primarily focus on administrative issues (such as where and how to register, class schedules, and materials required). As a result, too few students are aware of the different ways in which programs can benefit them, and too few have very clear or far-reaching goals.

We recommend a common approach to student orientation statewide that is developed within this Adult Education for Work framework and draws heavily upon partnership with WorkOne. In this vein, part of the student orientation should be an introduction to Indiana Career Explorer tool.

We also recommend formation of an Orientation Team, in the form of a five to eight member working group of AECs and Provider staff with strong orientation presentations already in place, as well as others interested in identifying best practices building a strong product. Their process would include reviewing all the materials in place around the state and evaluating for quality, as well as guidelines found in the “Grant Continuation Guidance Document” for 2012–13. The group would then develop a “best content” or “recommended format” for Student Orientation, including written narrative content, bulleted list of topics to cover in Orientation, and perhaps a standard slide template that could be disseminated for Providers to draw from for their orientations, with obvious opportunity for regional customization. Once the materials are developed a webinar train-the-orientation-trainer session to could be used to disseminate the model to all staff that give orientations, to prepare them for using the new model. The group could use any feedback from that webinar for a Version 2 revision of the Template materials, if appropriate.

3. Learner Engagement, Persistence and Completion

Policies on Student Enrollment, Attendance, Retention, Persistence

When asked about their response to State or Regional policies on a variety of program elements, and their own internal policies, it is clear that there is limited Policy at the statewide level on matters such as Enrollment, Attendance, Persistence and Retention and some minimal policy developed at the Regional level. Of those Providers giving narrative responses on these topics (only about half of Providers), a significant number (13 of 31) have no Regional or Provider policies in place related to student **enrollment**, with 9 having a Regional policy and 9 having a Provider policy.⁸ **Attendance** policies are less common at the Regional level (4 Providers report having a Regional policy, but these are in different Regions and most Providers in those same Regions do not report such a Policy, so we believe this could be respondent

⁸ This section is drawn from Question 62 and a series of sub-questions. Narrative responses are of interest and can be found in the full database. Current summary tables are unwieldy at this time. EDSI can compile these into a clearer matrix to identify any Regional trends as to policy development.

error), while 25 Providers report having their own Attendance policy within their organization. There are no State or Regional policies on student Persistence or Retention, though 22 Providers report having an internal organization policy on **persistence** and 16 report having a **retention** policy.

DWD has had a strong belief in “Regional Inflection” in these matters, and wisely has not wanted to overburden diverse localities with a “one size fits all” approach. Providers echoed this sentiment, with numerous smaller Providers noting that strict attendance/retention policies can be onerous, result in unnecessary bureaucracy, and get in the way of building strong, consistent helping relationships with students. Conversely, many larger Providers noted a need for such policies to be a “first cut” in triaging student enrollments when facing long waiting lists or lines of people needing services.

However, also based on a large number of the Benchmarking interview discussions, Providers want some guidance in these areas and the vast majority wanted a standard at the Regional, or even the State level. Several stated that they would rather have some policy, even if it isn’t exactly the policy they would wish for, simply so that they and their peers across the state could all be providing the “same program” and working on level playing field. Some of this sentiment related to performance measures, and ensuring that performance was evaluated within the same model statewide.

Policies on Attendance, Persistence and Retention

In order to find the right balance between DWD authority and “Regional Inflection,” consider convening Working Group of Adult Education Coordinators and Providers to discuss policies. This would likely start with the Attendance, Persistence and Retention policies in a comprehensive Attendance policy framework. There were a number of volunteers from the Benchmarking interviews to sit on this type of Working Group.

Each Working Group can consider the range of concerns across the state, the needs of smaller and larger Providers, urban and rural, and other differences that exist in different program and Provider models, and then make recommendations to DWD as to whether there should be, for each topic, 1) a single statewide policy, 2) formal Regional policy or 3) leave the issue unregulated and permit Providers to set their own policy.

Also consider developing practices, such as “small learning communities” (SLCs), that support persistence and retention. There is a substantial literature on SLCs and their benefits to student learning. And use of online technology could both strengthen small learning communities and improve students’ ability to learn new technologies.

Career Counseling and Case Management

Career counseling and case management are key elements of learner engagement and completion. Career counseling relates directly to completion. Following the maxim – “Start

With The End in Mind” – if students are to reach a successful completion of getting a credential and a job, they need to see at the beginning where they can go and understand how they can get there. Supporting and guiding them on the road to that attainment is the role of case management.

However, interviews in the benchmarking process indicate that there is confusion about the roles of career counseling and case management, and which organizations are responsible for which functions. For example, it was unclear to Provider staff who should oversee the Indiana Career Explorer (ICE) and who should assess and counsel students in terms of their overall life goals, career goals, work readiness, etc.

In its AE “grant guidance” for PY 2012-13 (pg 16) DWD has noted that adult education is responsible for “life coaching” and WorkOnes are responsible for career counseling. Perhaps, this will contribute to role clarification. However, it seems important here to note that the Benchmarking process surfaced a concern in many Regions that there is a greater need to enhance the “life coaching” component of the Adult Education system directly (in the many cases where a student is not co-enrolled with WorkOne) and in conjunction with the WorkOne system.

Indiana Career Explorer (ICE)

The Indiana Career Explorer is a self-administered online assessment questionnaires to assess individuals’ skills, interests, abilities and work styles as relates to the workforce.⁹ It can serve as a valuable guide for Adult Education students in setting, and understanding how to achieve, their employment goals. The utilization of ICE within Adult Education is new, and it is relatively new within the related Workforce Development system, only launching in summer 2011.

There is a clear lack of consistency in the use of ICE across the state and within Regions. The very small proportion of Providers currently using the ICE tools in assessing students’ overall career interests, aptitudes, values and needs appear to have limited expertise, and would benefit from a more expanded capacity-building in this area, and the vast majority do not utilize the assessments at all.

The use of the ICE self-assessment presents an important opportunity for helping students focus on their employment-related goals from the outset of their program enrollment. Adult Education teachers or identified program staff should be trained in administering and interpreting the Indiana Career Explorer (ICE) assessments and delivering the insights from them to students. This training can relatively easily be built upon the existing training provided

⁹ Indiana Career Explorer (ICE), an online tool developed by workforce firm Kuder, Inc., is available online to any Indiana resident for self-assessment and is formally used in the WorkOne system, where Academic and Career Counselors administer the ICE assessments as part of the process of helping customers determine their career goals, training pathways and workplaces to target in their job search.

by EDSI for Case Managers and Academic and Career Counselors (ACCs)¹⁰ in the WorkOne system and could be delivered as a webinar or in Regional training workshops and perhaps in conjunction with other staff-training activities. There should also be a system to coordinate ICE assessment interpretation with WorkOne staff for co-enrolled individuals

Data Systems, Management and Use

As noted below in the questions regarding Referrals, many Providers feel that there should be technological methods of co-case management and student/customer tracking between the Adult Education and WorkOne systems. Specifically, Providers recommended providing Adult Education Providers access to the TrackOne system for reviewing the prior assessments and ongoing workforce services being provided to their students, and giving WorkOne staff access to the InTERS system in order to see in real-time the Adult Education case files of customers being served by Adult Education.

WorkOne staff currently has access to the InTERS system. It is recommended that all users receive training on the InTERS system. It is also recommended that a process be developed to regularly run InTERS data matches statewide between WorkOne and Adult Education to track referrals and co-enrolled customers as well as those who would be good candidates for referral from Adult Education to WorkOne, and identify methods to run similar reports from TrackOne. This access will enhance services and dual or co-case-management across the two systems and will improve outcomes for students/customers of the WorkOne and Adult Education systems and will likely save time and money by allowing each partner to gain access to critical facts about their individual students/customers' educational and career planning processes, life events, barriers, crises and overall situations and progress.

4. Transition to Postsecondary Education/Training and Employment

Enabling students to transition to postsecondary education or training and to employment is the product of the collective input of key partners collaborating with the AE Providers. The key partners for collaboration are:

- WorkOnes
- Community Colleges
- Businesses

The mission and roles of these key partners can be succinctly summarized as follows:

- WorkOne AE-related mission: enable each Adult Education student to obtain employment.

¹⁰ This is a new role in WorkOne. ACC's are tasked with assessing and guiding individuals in determining a career path and appropriate vocational training opportunities and following up throughout the training process.

Role: Employment-related functions toward that goal.

- Community College AE-related mission: enable each Adult Education student to obtain a recognized, employment-related credential.

Role: Education-related functions toward that goal.

- Business Role: hire Adult Education students, or provide employment-related opportunities, such as Work Experience.

Community Colleges¹¹

The relationship between the Adult Education system and the community colleges in Indiana exists on several levels. One of these, the WorkINdiana career pathways program, will be discussed in the next Section. On a more general level, community colleges play a critical role in Adult Education in several ways:

- as provider of vocational skills training at the certificate or Associates level, the next-step that individuals may often take after completing adult basic education;
- as provider of these trainings as a concurrent activity (for those within WorkINdiana or similar streamlined programs);
- as location of some Adult Education services, where providers have co-located their programs within the colleges;
- as a partner with the WorkOne system, and thus part of a multi-partner network in an Adult Education for Work model; and
- as a partner in Regional Consortia offering their expertise in higher education toward planning and guiding Adult Education services in a region.

The two main community college systems in Indiana, Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana (statewide) and Vincennes University (in southwestern Indiana, serving portions of DWD Regions 7, 8 and 11), have enrollment of over 80,000 students and offer a wide range of postsecondary programs with associates degrees, technical and career development certificates in over 200 academic programs.

Based on insights from the Benchmarking interviews, the community colleges are involved in the Adult Education Regional Consortia in most Regions, with the AECs reporting significant involvement in eight of the eleven regions, while in the other three regions (Regions 5, 6 and 8) the colleges seem to have sporadic involvement through facilitating transition into college

¹¹ Several Questions from the Benchmarking surveys included provide insights into this section on Community College interactions, including Questions 29 and 29.1 from all surveys (Adult Education Provider, Regional Operator/Consortium and Adult Education Coordinator) as well as Questions 26 on WorkINdiana Question 27 (co-location with community colleges) and Question 28 (Transition to Post-secondary school). The Provider data is not copied here due to length of including all 69 narrative responses.

coursework from individual Adult Education programs. In most cases involvement is sitting on the Regional Consortium, while in a number of Regions the colleges also deliver or participate in the development of curricula and delivery of WorkINDiana programs. In a few cases the colleges offer space for co-location of Adult Education classes.

The Regional Operators support this view of the involvement of Ivy Tech and Vincennes, though their concern also includes provision of training through the WorkOne training voucher (Individual Training Account or ITA) program, and so all of the ROs state that the colleges are involved in their work to some degree.

The AECs offer a less consistent view of the community colleges' involvement directly in facilitating Adult Education students' transition to postsecondary education and coursework. In half of the regions (Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, and 8) there is no involvement, while in the other regions the colleges provide services including outreach staff visits to the Adult Education Providers, Consortia sub-committees focused on the transition, and other interactions.

Community Colleges

The role of community colleges in the adult education system is to ensure that students attain a credential that qualifies them for employment. Community colleges perform a variety of functions contributing to this end goal: creating curricula effective for this student population; creating articulation arrangements between AE courses and college credits; scheduling courses to accelerate learning; creating modular courses and stackable credentials, and other means.

Opportunities for collaboration toward these ends abound. In collaboration with the Regional Operators, the WorkOnes, and other stakeholders DWD should undertake a planning process in conjunction with the colleges to identify the results to be achieved through collaboration, such as those cited above, and what methods can best achieve the results desired. In addition, these parties have the experience necessary to identify the barriers to and incentives for achieving these results, which could lead to vastly improved practices. This might best be part of a tri-partite collaborative process among WorkOne, Adult Education and the community colleges.

In some states, Adult Ed is provided to a significant degree on-site at community colleges. We do not recommend a wholesale change to the Indiana system, but do suggest that more co-location of classes delivered by current Adult Education Providers on-site at community colleges can be an important first step toward a closer relationship and can significantly improve the transition to postsecondary education. As suggested in a number of papers and in the Adult Education for Work framework, start the "transition" process from the very beginning of an Adult Education student's studies. As one guidance suggests, "High expectations accompanied by realistic assessments of current competencies may spur students' toward higher achievement than they themselves thought possible" and putting higher education on the table from the start allows students to see a higher purpose for the basic skills education,

even if, in the end, they don't pursue college.¹² Also, for some individuals lacking basic education, the very idea of "going to college" can be intimidating. So starting the AE class at the college location can eliminate the "scary" transition to college from AE as long as strong personal supports are provided to ensure students comfort in going to a college campus. With an adequate personal support system, courses "on campus" can facilitate achievement of postsecondary credentials.

Supports for Credential Attainment

If it has not already been done, analyze data on credential attainment in the AE system over the past 5 years to determine recent performance and trends. While the mission of Indiana's AE system is to enable students to obtain an academic or occupational credential that will qualify them for employment and a career, in most AE systems it takes years for students to even achieve a GED. It is likely that substantial system development will be needed to enable students to expediently obtain post-secondary credentials.

We recommend a statewide, WorkOne-IvyTech-Vincennes-AdultEducation discussion about helping turn credentials into degrees. There is a national dialogue about terminal credentials, and community colleges are beginning to implement industry-focused degrees like the "associates in advanced manufacturing" where three or four separate credentials can be "accredited" at their institutions, and amassed into an Associates level degree rather than standing alone and being "terminal" credentials. One roadblock is that the students inevitably would need to take several general education courses in order to make it a full degree. Several Providers discussed this in terms of having the Adult Education system offer those general education courses on their sites in conjunction with the community college. The general nature would be to perfect early content that would be concurrent with helping the AE students improve their reading and math skills.

DWD has already implemented some initiatives that can improve credential attainment: DWD's emphasis on accelerated learning, through the new funding formula, is an important step in moving in this direction. And the WorkINdiana program provides an excellent model for credential attainment. Other techniques include:

- Modular courses, in which students can achieve credentials as they progress in skill development.
- Contextualized instruction (discussed earlier).
- "Stackable credentials", which certify increasing higher levels of occupational skill attainment and can eventually build to a degree.
- Refine curricula for improved articulation between AE classes and certificates.

¹² Cartier, Kimberly. "Tips for Adult Educators on Incorporating Transition to Postsecondary Education and Career Development into the Adult Education Classroom."
<http://www.nhadulted.org/educators/resources/Tips%20for%20Postsecondary%20Transitions.pdf> Also see: <http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/postsecondarycompletion>

- Registered Apprenticeship, in which AE students can obtain a job and “earn while they learn”, and upon completion of the apprenticeship program, obtain a nationally recognized, portable Journey-person credential. Registered Apprenticeships are becoming common outside the traditional industries, such as construction, and are found in health care, manufacturing, IT and other expanding industries.

Businesses

The Benchmarking survey did not look at business participation, as it was felt to be premature to look at this topic at that time. However, in terms of AE system development, it will be important to increasingly focus on business engagement. Without businesses, who become the employers that hire Adult Education students, there would be no way to achieve the goal of the Adult Education program: employment. Business engagement is key to success.

Adult Education programs need to engage businesses for opportunities as a transition to permanent employment through work experience opportunities, internships, apprenticeships, OJT placements, subsidized jobs, and unsubsidized jobs

By working together, the community colleges, WorkOnes and adult education providers can start to resolve the paradigm of employers not being able to fill positions due to not finding people with the right skills. A critical piece of the process is developing relationships with a small number of local businesses in key industries that have labor shortages and design workplace-based courses that meet their needs; as well as develop reading, math and workplace skills curricula that are contextualized to the demand occupations.

5. WorkINDiana Career Pathways Program

WorkINDiana is a collaborative program between WorkOne and the Adult Education system, and in many cases the community colleges, that combines pursuit of a GED with occupational skills training. WorkINDiana is intended to facilitate students’ accelerated transition to occupational training, by delivering basic skills and occupational training concurrently, and by building a seamless transition between these steps in order to help the student move along their career path. DWD has identified pathways in five industries (Healthcare, Information Technology, Transportation/Distribution/Logistics, Advanced Manufacturing and Business Administration) and over 80 WorkINDiana courses have been approved across Indiana. The Benchmarking survey looked at a number of issues related to WorkINDiana which we will present below.

A. Referrals to WorkINDiana

In interviews with the AECs and Regional Operators, in all Regions, WorkOne refers students into the WorkINDiana program on a regular basis, those begun in a WorkINDiana program are co-enrolled in wider WorkOne services and those who begin in Adult Education are referred

into WorkINdiana.¹³ Based on this, there seems to be universal commitment to the process, which is very positive for a program that remains relatively new. However, progress remains slow at actually moving students into the WorkINdiana programs that have been developed. Actual DWD data on the program will be superior to the self-reports that were given by AECs and ROs in the Benchmarking interviews, but based on these, as few as zero (in five Regions) and only as many as ten (in Region 4) students began WorkINdiana in a recent month (February 2012, when the Benchmarking interviews were conducted). In several Regions that do report data, at the time of this survey, 10 to 12 individuals per region had begun the program. This is understandable to some degree for a new program, but should be closely monitored in coming months to ensure uptake of this important model.

Recruitment processes in place around Indiana are relatively consistent, with the WorkOne staff (usually the Academic and Career Counselor) identifying students who may be suitable for the program, and some students coming in asking about the program themselves. In some areas the Adult Education teachers also identify students who may be appropriate, and then facilitate their transition into the WorkINdiana program, thus enhancing their current Adult Education with the wider planning and transition to occupational training. Regions vary in the intensity of recruitment activities, with one region (Region 6) using public advertisements, flyers at the WorkOne and other social service locations, and various social media, while most Regions limit recruitment to Adult Education and WorkOne staff.

B. Postsecondary Institution involvement in WorkINdiana

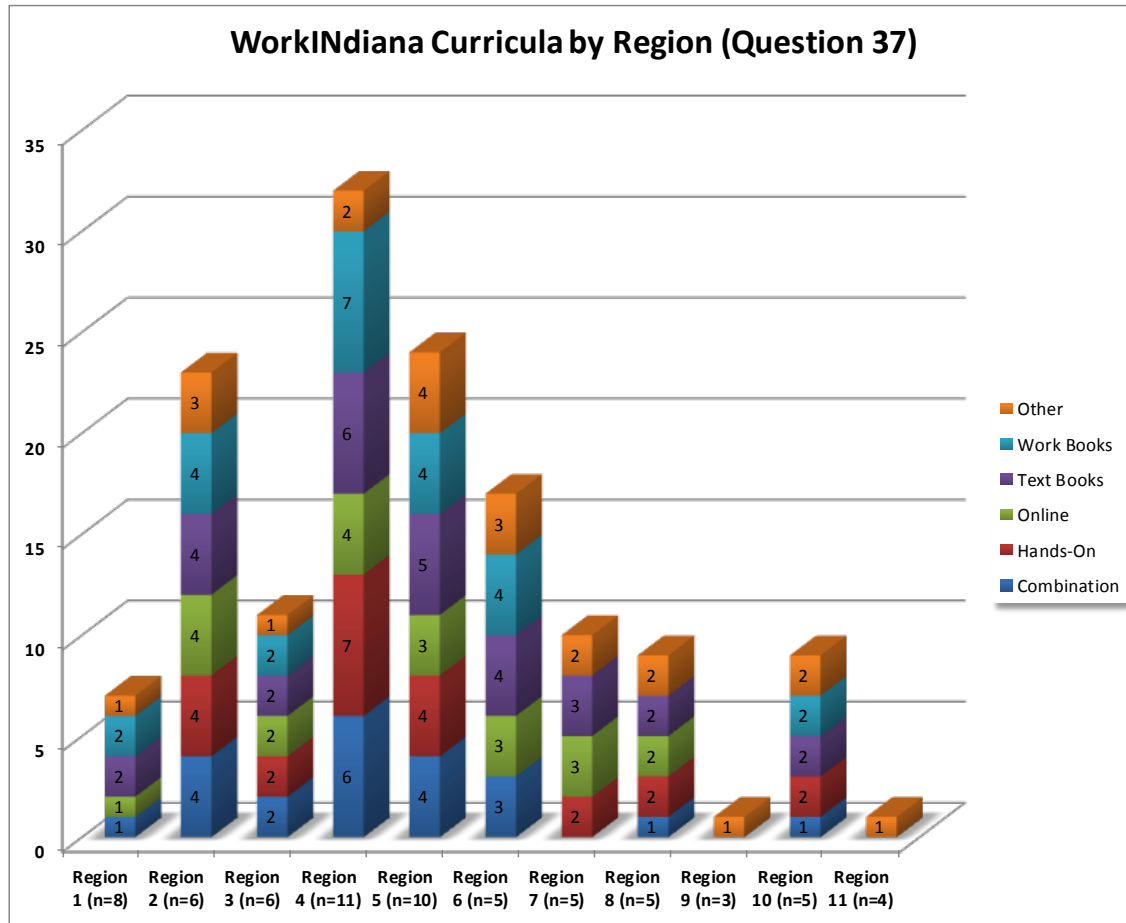
In most Regions, the postsecondary institutions (in most cases Ivy Tech, as well as Vincennes University in Region 11), are involved to some degree in the WorkINdiana program, with a number of the occupational skills courses being delivered directly by the colleges, and the colleges offering technical help in curriculum development, recruiting, site for classes in most areas. The involvement seems to be at an appropriate level based on the Benchmarking and the existing Implementation Plans from each Region.

¹³ In the Regional Operator interviews in Region 11, the individual interviewed responded “no” to these questions, which could suggest a need for more clarity and development of the collaboration in that region.

C. WorkINDiana Curricula

The curricula and methods of delivery of WorkINDiana programs that are used in the various Regions vary based on the courses being offered as well as who is doing the training. The methods of delivery of WorkINDiana training are summarized below (Question 37).

Figure 6



Many Providers are using hands-on training, workbooks and textbooks in the curriculum, with a few programs using an online method. Most use a wide combination of these elements, and the degree to which they are used varies based on the kind of program, with things like CDL and healthcare fields using significantly more hands-on than others, but a number of programs utilizing online components for viewing course lectures and for some elements of several Administrative Assistant and IT trainings. Most coursework is delivered in cohorts, with some elements being self-paced or on a rolling-admission basis.

The majority of the curricula were adapted from curricula that existed already in the Region, whether on the existing menu of training programs by the community college or through

another provider, or were adapted from existing high school classes delivered by the school corporation (where the school corporation is the Adult Education Provider).

D. WorkINDiana Program Management and Challenges

WorkINDiana Providers are selected primarily by the Consortium or a committee of the Consortium, from among existing entities within the Region and community. In some cases volunteers were also accepted, with less of a formal selection or approval process, in order to expand the range of possible WorkINDiana pathways. In some cases the providers of WorkINDiana occupational skills training are the Adult Education Providers, many of them being the school corporations in the community. In a number of other cases they are other approved training entities including the community colleges as well as private trainers such as a private truck driver training school. In a few Regions, there appears to have been a challenging in identifying trainers willing to participate, due to the payment structures and strict guidelines around provision of WorkINDiana training.

Each region selects their menu of WorkINDiana courses from among the DWD-approved career pathways. The courses were generally selected by a subcommittee of the Consortium or other combination of the WorkOne staff and Adult Education staff. Several areas referenced researching the “Indiana Hot 50” job list and further research done by the Business Service Representatives (BSRs, often known as job developers) in WorkOne on what programs would be most appropriate in the region.

Once selected, the WorkINDiana programs are monitored to varying degrees across the state. Responses to a question on “How does the Region determine if a WorkINDiana program is/is not performing?” (Question 46.1) vary across the state.

AEC and RO/Consortium Surveys, Q46.1		
How does the Region determine if a WorkINDiana program is/is not performing?		
Region	Q46,1 - RO/CONSORTIUM	Q46.1 - AEC
1	Lack of recruitment.	If a program is not up and running, another provider will be sought.
4		Enrollment, completion, and employment
5	If a client shares with a case manager that a program is not meeting the needs of the client the RO(s) visit the WorkINDiana provider.	if a client tells a case manager of an issue the regional operator will do a secret visit to the program. We have done this. Additionally, AE providers have shared concerns about programs and the RO looks into them.
6	We are not there yet. It could be based on grades, attendance hours, and number of students/clients who complete the coursework, and/or certification completions.	Not there yet.

7		They will review data, but most classes have not completed yet.
8	Too early	too early to tell
9	We determined that the CNA class was successful.	The RO is dissatisfied with the service of Ivy Tech and is looking for new training providers. Classes are scheduled, students enrolled, and then the class is cancelled at the last minute. There have also been issues with payment.
10	We look at our monthly report to see how many students have been enrolled and completed.	By the monthly report sent to the state. No WorkINDiana students have been enrolled as of March 1 in Region 10.

In some areas (four Regions), AECs and Regional Operators report that the programs are so new that processes for determining whether the training providers are delivering a quality program have not yet been developed. Plans for this monitoring include reviewing the outcomes data from the program in terms of a variety of measures suggested by different Regions including numbers of enrollments compared to targets, attendance hours, completions, certifications, and later employment outcomes, as well as responding to student complaints or concerns. One region (Region 5) has already sent staff to sit in on a class about which students brought concerns to their case manager, and worked with the Provider to improve the program. Another region has already become concerned with one of their trainers but does not have a formal mechanism in place to cancel their participation.

To date, some programs are in place and moving students through the pathways, while others are “on the books” but with few students. About half of the Regions report that they have developed a full Pathway for each program, developing the several steps of coursework and employment that students/customers may progress through within their targeted industry. (Question 44.1) In these and other regions, AECs and Regional Operators report that they still need to do a great deal to improve business and industry involvement and input into curricula and solidify the details of the pathways, and in many areas they state that more needs to be done on marketing the programs.

AEC and RO/Consortium Surveys, Q44.1. Has the region made progress in establishing a complete career pathway? Has the region partnered with post-secondary institutions to develop next steps after WorkINDiana? Has the region established formal business partners? Does a subcommittee exist to work on building the complete pathway? Have any marketing materials or graphics been developed?

Region	Q44.1 RO/Consortium	Q44.1 AEC
1	Yes for all	Yes, Ivy Tech is involved. There has been no establishment of business partners. Yes there is a subcommittee for strengthening WorkINDiana. Currently, there are few, if any, marketing materials. This has been discussed and is in initial stages.

4	Certification courses for WorkINDiana started early 2012; next steps will follow. Yes, formal business partners established. Yes, subcommittee formed. No major marketing tools have been developed.	No--just launching WorkINDiana Not formally Committee has been appointed, RWB Youth Council working on pathways and developed healthcare publication marketing materials.
5	Yes-Post secondary Very little-Businesses Yes-A Pathway Committee Exist No-Marketing material as a consortium but each program has marketing material.	Ivy Tech is offering multiple pathways. They have been approved to offer any pathway at any location (except their downtown Marion location where they can only offer logistics). EmployIndy (RO) has jobs lined up for almost everyone who enters a WorkINDiana program
6	We are working on it. We do have business partners with the developing WorkINDiana programs. We have a complete C.N.A. pathway. The materials we distribute is the WorkOne magazine. Providers create their own materials and graphic to promote WorkINDiana.	C.N.A. is a pathway, again, funding is the struggle. We can start the student but can't get them any further on the ladder. We are trying to partner with post-secondary institutions, Richmond is the best example of where this is working in Region 6. The
7		Not a lot of focus on the pathway, as much effort was required to get the first WorkINDiana classes established. We have had several employers provide feedback for the welding class we are working to establish
8	Not yet, for WorkINDiana specifically. Individual programs have marketing materials	No to all except marketing materials. Broadview did develop WorkINDiana marketing materials
9	no sustainability for funding - yes to business partners - no - no Would like to get something from state	no - Business partners somewhat in the Employment Plus model at McDowell
10	We have an Ivy Tech rep on our Consortium, and we have and will continue to communicate concerning Corporate College and entrance into post-secondary education. We have formal business partners for WorkINDiana; we have a WorkINDiana Committee who meets regularly to evaluate	The AEC has spoken with Ivy Tech Corporate College rep and she is on the WorkINDiana Committee. Formal business partners are in place with RO and some of the WorkINDiana providers; no marketing materials have been developed.
11	Not specific to WorkINDiana	Trying to get Ivy Tech buy in. No. No. No.

Some barriers continue to exist in terms of moving students through WorkINDiana. These are reflected in the following Table regarding Question 43, with responses from AECs and Regional Operators/Consortia members. These barriers include: Limited number of potential providers, recruitment challenges, time lag between a student's selection/enrollment in a program and the coursework starting, the sometimes confusing logistics of the referral/enrollment processes, lack of sufficient marketing, and students' difficulties taking on the significant time

commitment and logistics of the dual programs. An additional barrier was the “30%/70%” payment process that was in place that paid Providers and trainers most of the funds for each student’s training upon their completion, and did not put enough funds up-front to support the initial costs of forming a course or cohort (instructor, space, materials, etc.). Many of these are to be expected of a new program, but warrant further attention.

AEC and RO/Consortium Surveys, Q44.1. Has the region made progress in establishing a complete career pathway? Has the region partnered with post-secondary institutions to develop next steps after WorkINDiana? Has the region established formal business partners? Does a subcommittee exist to work on building the complete pathway? Have any marketing materials or graphics been developed?		
Region	Q44_1 RO/Consortium	Q44_1 AEC
1	Yes for all	Yes, Ivy Tech is involved. There has been no establishment of business partners. Yes there is a subcommittee for strengthening WorkINDiana. Currently, there are few, if any, marketing materials. This has been discussed and is in initial stages.
4	Certification courses for WorkINDiana started early 2012; next steps will follow. Yes, formal business partners established. Yes, subcommittee formed. No major marketing tools have been developed.	No--just launching WorkINDiana Not formally Committee has been appointed, RWB Youth Council working on pathways and developed healthcare publication marketing materials.
5	Yes-Post secondary Very little-Businesses Yes-A Pathway Committee Exist No-Marketing material as a consortium but each program has marketing material.	Ivy Tech is offering multiple pathways. They have been approved to offer any pathway at any location (except their downtown Marion location where they can only offer logistics). EmployIndy (RO) has jobs lined up for almost everyone who enters a WorkINDiana program
6	We are working on it. We do have business partners with the developing WorkINDiana programs. We have a complete C.N.A. pathway. The materials we distribute is the WorkOne magazine. Providers create their own materials and graphic to promote WorkINDiana.	C.N.A. is a pathway, again, funding is the struggle. We can start the student but can't get them any further on the ladder. We are trying to partner with post-secondary institutions, Richmond is the best example of where this is working in Region 6. The
7		Not a lot of focus on the pathway, as much effort was required to get the first WorkINDiana classes established. We have had several employers provide feedback for the welding class we are working to establish
8	Not yet, for WorkINDiana specifically. Individual programs have marketing materials	No to all except marketing materials. Broadview did develop WorkINDiana marketing materials
9	no sustainability for funding - yes to business partners - no - no	no - Business partners somewhat in the Employment Plus model at McDowell

	Would like to get something from state	
10	We have an Ivy Tech rep on our Consortium, and we have and will continue to communicate concerning Corporate College and entrance into post-secondary education. We have formal business partners for WorkINDiana; we have a WorkINDiana Committee who meets regularly to evaluate	The AEC has spoken with Ivy Tech Corporate College rep and she is on the WorkINDiana Committee. Formal business partners are in place with RO and some of the WorkINDiana providers; no marketing materials have been developed.
11	Not specific to WorkINDiana	Trying to get Ivy Tech buy in. No. No. No.

As noted above, because the program involves a number of partners and work going on concurrently by several overlapping entities, coordination is critical. We recommend increasing technical assistance to the Consortia and provider/trainer partnerships in order to improve the customer flow. This may come in the form of one-on-one technical assistance but also may include development of further training or handbooks on the basic elements of putting together and streamlining a given program.

Regions have different ideas about this, and consistency will be a significant benefit to the overall program statewide. We recommend utilizing the regular reporting processes, and on an annual basis reconfirming that each program is working successfully. This review should include an evaluation by the Consortium or the AEC (or other identified role per DWD) of all aspects of the project, including the curriculum, the actual delivery of training, the transitions and relationships between the Adult Education and occupational training components of the program, student post-training outcomes and also student comments/evaluation of the programs.

6. State and Local Corrections

The Corrections system can be a significant partner with Adult Education, but real potential appears unrealized and a number of Providers reported that the partnership needs work. Corrections contributes approximately \$7.5M in Maintenance of Effort to the system, which is an amount nearly equal to that provided by the direct WIA Title II funding (\$10M). Nineteen Providers in eight Regions report delivering direct Corrections services as part of their menu of services, and more than half (36 of 69) of the Providers report receiving referrals from the Corrections system either through parole officers or courts (where judges will make participation a requirement for probation or of parole).

Many Providers noted during Benchmarking interviews that the Corrections/court system relationship with Adult Ed needs work. They report that there is not enough follow up from the courts on referrals and that the system too often lets individuals who are referred get away without actually attending Adult Education, but still getting “credit” for it in their cases. Often probationers will come to the first day of class seeking a signature on an attendance form, but

then not show up afterward. The Provider staff are primarily concerned that the individuals are as a result not getting the service, though they do feel concerned that their system can get a bad reputation if it is seen as fostering this behavior. There is a desire for a coordinated cooperative effort with state leadership of the Corrections system.

Given the reported problems in some of the ways in which the AE-Corrections inter-relate now, it is advisable that DWD further examine how the connections are actually operating and what practices may need improvement.

Some Providers suggested that at the State staff level, DWD reach out to the Corrections system to develop strategies for clearer referral and reporting processes. It is more likely that local providers are working with the county corrections system and they may need some technical assistance to determine the most effective ways to work with the corrections systems. Ex-offenders are a difficult population to retain in services such as Adult Education, but a concerted effort and stronger linkages between the systems can improve retention and outcomes. As with other elements of coordination discussed in this report, such coordination should also include the WorkOne system, since employment is likely a need for many formerly incarcerated individuals coming out of the Corrections system. Particularly in light of the purposes of DWD's Adult Education program – i.e., transition to employment – the Corrections system should see great benefit from their individuals on probation or parole participating in Adult Education as well as WorkOne services.

B. Findings: Management

1. Organizational Management and Coordination

WorkOnes

The general topic of coordination with WorkOnes is discussed under the “Organizational and Management Section” below. But it is important to note here the critical role of the WorkOne system with regard to Adult Education: helping orient students toward an employment goal and helping students transition to work.

In this capacity, WorkOnes can provide:

- Occupational demand information (through various means, including ICE);
- Career preparation information (through various means, including ICE);
- Employer connections, including Work Experience opportunities; and
- Job placement, including OJTs and connections to the Registered Apprenticeship system.
- Ensure that Adult Education Providers understand the roles WorkOnes can perform and the capabilities of the WorkOne system.

Overall Coordination

Coordination between Adult Education and WorkOne systems is a desired outgrowth of having these two systems managed by the same Indiana state agency. However, presence within that oversight body does not necessitate a strong relationship at the front-line level among the 69 Adult Education Providers and the system of WorkOne operators delivering services at over 85 sites. This requires one-on-one interaction, meetings, staff cross-training and a variety of other supports and incentives.

Based on the Benchmarking survey of Adult Education Providers as well as WorkOne Regional Operators, Adult Education Regional Consortia and Adult Education Coordinators, the picture is varied across the State, and some trends appear to exist with relation to this coordination. A group of narrative responses seeking descriptions of the relationships (Question 12, “Is there formal coordination in place between the WorkOnes and AE Providers? What is it? What does it look like? (a policy, a process, etc.)”) shows that in nine Regions, the Regional Operators report presence of a formal coordination, while two (Regions 3 and 6) do not feel there is coordination. In some Regions, each WorkOne Center is assigned a specific Adult Education program as a partner, or vice versa, and in many Regions, career advisors (Academic and Career Counselors, or ACCs) spend certain days/times on-site at the Adult Education programs to provide direct services, and regular cross program staff meetings are held.¹⁴¹⁵

Among Providers, nineteen (19) of 69 exhibit a strong relationship between the two entities, with contact on multiple staff levels and across multiple methods of communication and cooperation. At the strongest are a few cases where co-location includes strong staff cross-training, given staff members assigned roles in interacting with one another’s organizations, and strong regular reporting and coordination at the management level.

Twenty-five of the Providers have an assigned WorkOne staff member tasked with referrals and coordinating case management of Adult Education students co-enrolled with WorkOne. Six Providers have a standard referral form or other documentation of relationships. On the other end of the spectrum, a few (about 18 Providers) appear to have a weaker relationship, with very informal and varied or sporadic interactions, with several appearing to have very limited interaction with the WorkOne system.

Given the low levels of coordination in some instances, it may be that some staff in both systems – Adult Education and WorkOne – do not see the benefits of coordination and how it might help them better achieve each system’s goals. In other sections of this report we make recommendations for improving referral, career counseling, case management and employment transition – which are all benefits that could be attained through improved

¹⁴ Regions 1 and 5, 7, 8 and 10 exhibit formal structures and processes for this work. “Each WorkOne is assigned specific AE program as a partner, have assigned career advisors who work with AE students at a specific site and go on-site when needed.”

¹⁵ Question 12.1 has informative data from Providers as well as Regional Operators/Consortia and AECs.

collaboration. It could be helpful if these benefits, and ways to achieve them, were more clearly articulated to staff in both systems.

We recommend establishing a vehicle for regular communication between staff in the two systems, and for jointly working out ways to improve collaboration to achieve mutual goals. This could be a “Workgroup” or “Team” within each Region made up of relevant staff from Adult Education and WorkOne who are most involved in referral and collaborative services for students/customers. Consider building into the calendar within each Region a regular meeting between WorkOne and Adult Education staff at which the Working Group or Team and other relevant staff will share information, strategize on collaborative activity, receive cross-training and become more familiar with one another and each others’ systems. DWD should serve as a support for these interactions, with AECs attending initial gatherings to help build momentum and structure where necessary.

A recommendation for the middle term is to set up an initial, then regular, Adult Ed / WorkOne Conference. Strongly requested by Adult Education Providers, this conference would focus on considerations of the relationships between the two systems and how best to deliver coherent, collaborative services to individual Indiana residents. This recommendation is discussed more fully in the section on Communications and Peer Learning.

Referral Process – Between Adult Education and WorkOne

Referrals from WorkOne to Adult Education, and from Adult Education Providers to WorkOne programs occur regularly within Indiana, but at varying degrees within Regions and by individual Providers. Questions about the existence of a referral process, and about follow-up, were asked separately of Regional Operators, AE Providers and Adult Education Coordinators. Responses varied widely and sometimes conflicted.

Referrals from WorkOne to Adult Education

When considering referrals from WorkOne to Adult Education 59% (41 Providers) said they have a relatively formal follow-up process to coordinate these referrals, with the WorkOne Case Manager or Academic and Career Counselor taking lead in the majority of cases, and a smaller number (11 Providers) reporting that the Adult Education staff manages these referrals. We believe that some individuals do move from WorkOne to Adult Education at the other 27 Providers, but from anecdotal evidence in the interviews, such referrals are sporadic or simply not tracked by either partner. A significant number – 26, representing 37 percent of Regions responding – said they do not follow up.

Within Regions, there is a great deal of variance in how strong the relationships are as evidenced by the chart below. Two Regions (4 and 8) appear from Provider interviews to have consistent strong referral relationships across all Providers, and the majority of several other Regions have these relationships, but in many others there are roughly equal numbers of Providers that do, and do not, report these referral relationships.

WorkOne Regional Operators report some coordination of referrals with all but one Region reporting a regional referral process (Question 13) and most (Question 14) reporting that someone follows up on these referrals to ensure that they do in fact enroll in Adult Education. Responses are widely varied with no clear trends across the Regions, with some stating that a written referral process/policy or referral form exists but others simply suggesting that referrals occur organically. Follow-up seems to be done by the case managers, but in some cases Regional Operators report that the follow-up occurs simply through a returned referral form with notation that the referral was successful. Adult Education Coordinator (AEC) responses reflect similar concerns. See narrative responses in the table below.

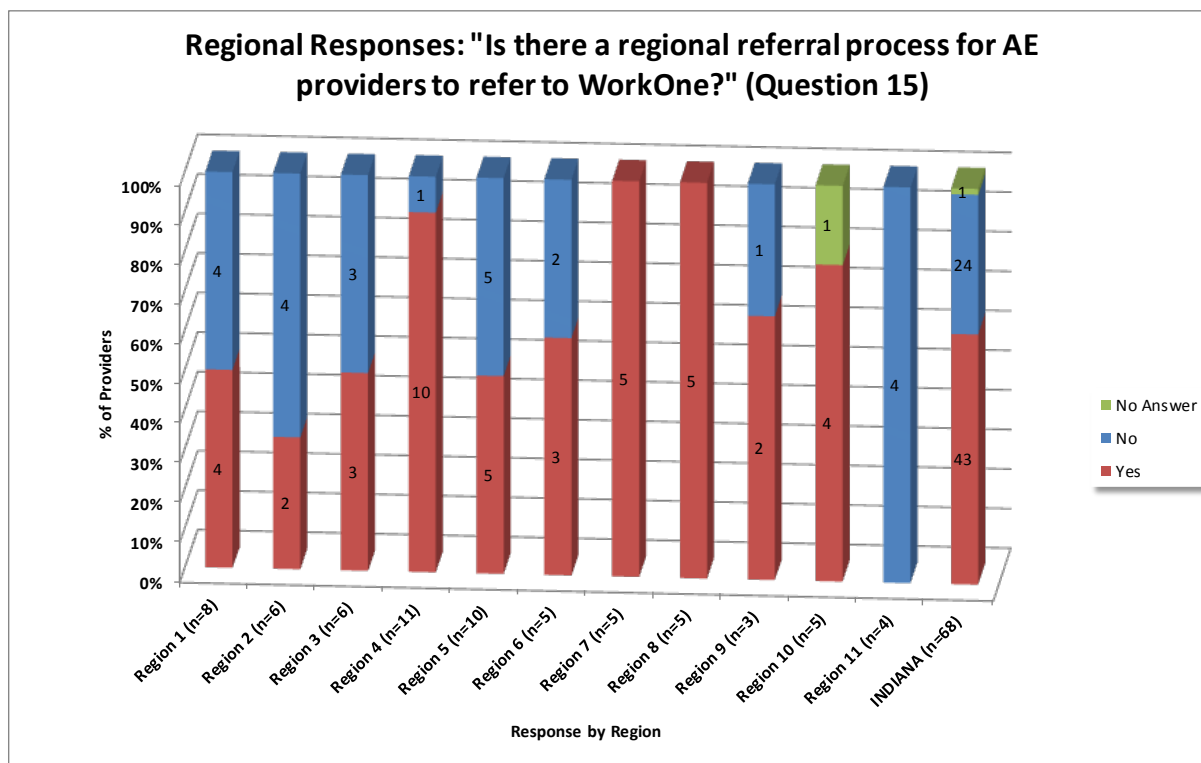
Referrals from Adult Education to WorkOne

In the other direction, AE Providers were asked (Question 15) if there is a regional referral process for referrals from AE to WorkOne. The picture is similar as in the reverse direction, with 63 percent (44 Providers) referencing a partnership and process established for referrals from Adult Education to WorkOne¹⁶. Again, a significant share – 34 percent (24 Providers) – said there is not a referral process.

Below is a Regional breakout of the responses to Question 15, asking AE Providers if there is a referral process from AE Providers to WorkOne. All Providers responding in Regions 7, 8 and 10 report a process (with one Provider in Region 10 not responding). At the other end of the spectrum, no Providers in Region 11 reported a referral process. In other Regions, responses are varied.

¹⁶ The specific question, Question 14, “Is there a regional referral process established for referrals from AE providers to WorkOne?” references a regional process, but based on follow up and comments, this appears to have been answered in terms of their own organizational processes as well, though it may reflect some confusions, since many Providers within the same Region answered differently to this yes/no question. Additionally, data in tables for responses from Regional Operators and AECs shows further different understandings of the situation.

Figure 7: Question 15



Among Adult Education Providers, there is a similar lack of Regional consistency, with Regions 4, 7, 8 and 11 having consistent perspectives (with all but Region 11 having a process), while in other regions the responses were mixed. At the extreme, Regions 3 and 5 interviews reflect that half of the Providers reference a process and the other half say there is not one. Overall where there is a referral process, the majority report that it is based primarily on informal staff relationships (35 of the Providers) with only 14 Providers reporting that there is a referral form to formalize the process.

There is some obvious connection in terms of referrals to those organizations that had strong, multi-vector overall processes and relationships. And there is, to some degree, coordination of referrals whereby if there are strong referrals in one direction (WorkOne identifying, through its Assessment process, customers needing basic skills remediation in order to progress in work and/or training, and thus making a referral for Adult Education), there are also strong ones in the other (Adult Education identifying students who are most in need, suitable for and likely to engage in WorkOne workforce services). Of particular note, in most Regions, staff interviewed simply did not have good data on the scale of referrals, outcomes of those referred or other information about the process and so could not speak with clarity regarding how and how well the referral relationships currently work.

Overall, based on Benchmarking interviews and other interactions, **Providers appear to want a formal referral process to be developed statewide or Region-wide, including a desire for**

statewide Referral Forms for referrals from WorkOne to Adult Education and from Adult Education to WorkOne. When asked how referrals can be improved, 44 Providers suggest that “any” formal process would help. Seventeen Providers recommend assigning specific, dedicated staff from each site of each entity to coordinate referrals between the two. Seven Providers suggested a standard referral form, and eleven suggested getting access to InTERS for WorkOne and/or access to the WorkOne TrackOne case management system for Adult Education staff. One region has already begun to plan a WorkOne/Adult Ed retreat or conference.

The Benchmarking study found that a functioning referral system from WorkOne to Adult Education and from Adult Education to WorkOne now depends on the personal relationships of key staff in the two systems rather than on good systems in place to facilitate referrals. Clearly referral needs to be systematized.

Typically it is possible to identify a small number of systemic disincentives for referral. Sometime they are related to program performance measures, sometimes to ill-designed or non-existent referral guidelines, sometimes to a lack of understanding of the benefits of referral. AE and WorkOne staff should be engaged in identifying the incentives and disincentives. They can then be part of the problem of removing or reducing the barriers.

Following the “what gets measured, gets done” philosophy, if we believe there is a benefit to more students/customers accessing both systems, then the process of regularly reporting on referrals should, in itself, help increase these referrals. Both InTERS and TrackOne have the capacity to track such referrals, and Providers/Operators could report on them, or DWD could monitor referrals and dual enrollments by running reports on a monthly or quarterly basis. DWD could follow up with those Providers or Regions where referral activity is low to determine reasons and provide technical assistance where necessary.

Some Providers and at least one Region already have Referral forms. However, a standard, recognizable form used Statewide would improve the coordination. We recommend identifying those Providers with a strong referral relationship in existence and encourage them to hold one or two meetings to 1) discuss all of the elements that should be included in each form, 2) consider any issues that may arise in different Regions requiring customization, and 3) draft a form for review by DWD and final implementation and dissemination. Once developed, a half-hour webinar could be provided to appropriate staff from each system, to roll out the form and answer any questions about its use throughout the state.

Other Sources of Referrals

The sources of referrals to Adult Education are plentiful. In Benchmarking interviews, when asked to describe the sources of referrals to Adult Education, most Providers listed five or more

sources from which students are referred to their programs. (Question 18/18.1)¹⁷ These include the court system (discussed above), literacy coalitions, community-based social service agencies, churches, public libraries, school systems and head start programs (flyers sent home with students to recruit parents needing assistance), stores and shopping centers, vocational rehabilitation programs, government partners such as WIC and TANF centers, community colleges, and public outreach through TV/radio, flyers and other advertisements.

Providers report a wide range of the impact of referrals. When asked what percentage or number of all enrollments come through a referral (as opposed to a walk-in or “self-referred” individual), many Providers suggest that it is a significant portion of enrollments (40-50%), while for a few it is much lower. A few report that they do not know where individuals come from, as they do not ask or track this information.¹⁸

Not so much a recommendation but an acknowledgement of the excellent work being done by the Providers, DWD should acknowledge the quality and quantity of referral sources and the solid numbers of students coming from those sources. Where some Providers may struggle more than others at securing enrollments from their various referral partners, DWD and the AECs, as well as those Providers with the most robust referral processes, can provide additional guidance through peer-mentoring by other Providers that are seeing more success in this area. In cases where Providers simply do not know the sources or track referrals, we recommend requiring some tracking of this in those Providers’ standard student data management forms and database.

Co-Location

Co-Location is encouraged as a means of improving collaboration between Adult Education Providers and WorkOnes. However, simply co-locating does not necessarily result in a strong interactive relationship. AECs and Providers report that there is some co-location in many Regions, but it appears that many responses do not meet DWD’s criteria for co-location. I.e., they are simply locating one Adult Education class at a WorkOne, or having an Academic and Career Counselor from WorkOne on-site at an Adult Education Provider a few hours or days per week. While beneficial, these practices do not meet the definition of co-location.

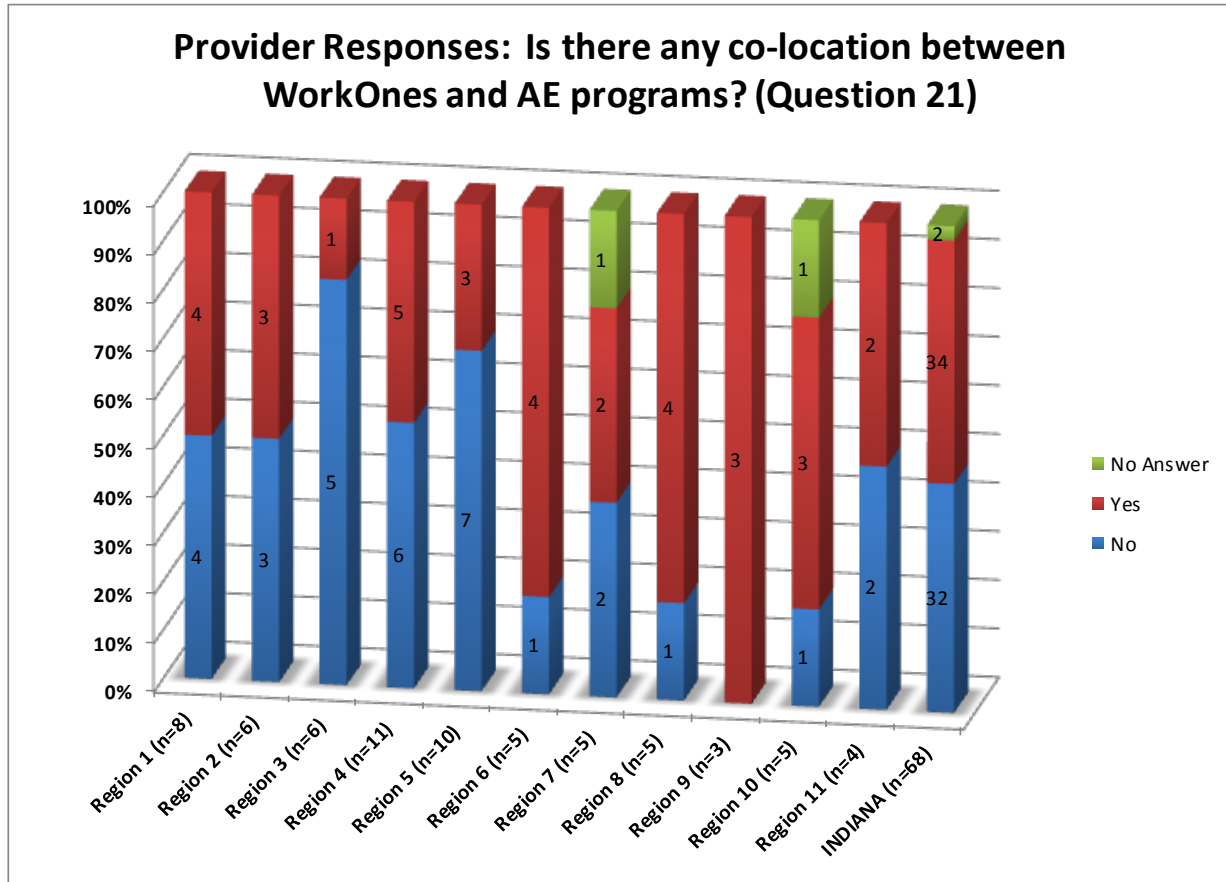
AECs report some of these lower-levels of coordination, with Adult Education offering some classes at WorkOnes or WorkOne having an “express” office at an Adult Education Provider, in

¹⁷ The full table of responses to Question 18.1 is impressive in the scope of sources each Provider utilizes and in the overall picture across Indiana of a system utilizing numerous community partners. A “best practices” conversation is warranted as discussed in the Recommendations.

¹⁸ Question 20, “How many referrals were made to Adult Education Providers (from all sources) during the past month?” garnered answers in a variety of forms and formats, from percentages to raw numbers, so it is difficult to compare across Providers and Regions. A future Benchmarking process or regular DWD reporting could require Providers to describe referrals, specifically as a percentage of all customers in order to gather comparable data.

most Regions. Eleven Providers responded to Question 12 regarding coordination by noting that they are co-located and so this is one method of coordinating. Separately, when asked if there is any co-location by their organization with WorkOne, 35 of the Providers said “yes” while 32 said “no”.

Figure 8: Question Q21



There is, clearly, a significant amount of service provided by each system at the others’ location, including permanent on-site Adult Education classes held at WorkOnes as well as lesser interactions such as placing a WorkOne staffer part-time at Adult Education sites for recruiting and customer case management. However, many Providers identified this as an area on which they could improve. In the Benchmarking interviews, there was strong desire to find ways to place Adult Education on-site at all WorkOnes, and to some extent vice-versa. The Providers felt strongly that this enhances coordination and referrals and keeping track of the students/participants/customers throughout their time being served.

DWD and their Adult Education Coordinators should work closely with their peers in the WorkOne system management to talk with Adult Education Providers and WorkOne operators about possible additional opportunities for co-location. Given the efficiencies gained both financially (possible reduced rental/operational costs) and programmatically (strengthened

referral and coordination relationships) this is an important step for future years in more closely integrating the two systems.

2. Program Staffing and Capacity Management

The capacity of the Adult Education programs across the state varies widely, in terms of numbers, times and formats whereby classes are offered, and so on. Some initial data is provided, with observations about specific situations and impacts.

Program Capacity

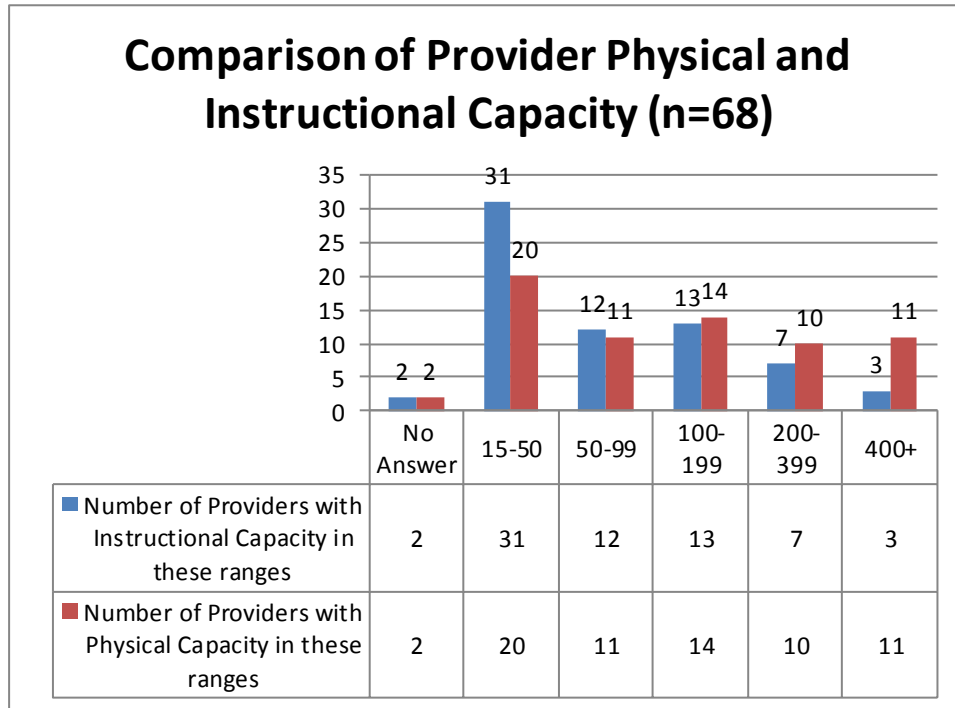
The Benchmarking process considered the capacity of Adult Education Providers in several ways, looking at both “physical capacity” (the total number of students that can be taught at any given time within the space) and “instructional capacity” (the total number that can be taught at a given time, with the number of teachers as a limiting factor as well as space). This was important as some sites may have access to a “massive” number of classrooms, for instance in a school building during evening hours, but of course cannot fill them all due to lack of funding for that many Adult Education teachers.

As shown in the chart below on physical capacity (Question 58), there is a range of sizes of Providers, with about half being relatively small with Physical capacity under 100 (33 of 68 Providers responding) and 22 of these having capacity under 50. Providers range across to larger sizes with 14 having capacity between 100 and 200, and an additional 21 with capacity over 200 and as high as a reported 1200 customers (Four County Provider in Region 3) and 4000 (Warren Township in Region 5).

Instructional capacity (Question 59), shown in the chart below is significantly more limited, with 33 Providers having a limit of 50 or fewer students at a given moment, an additional 12 Providers having between 50-100 student capacity and 13 having between 100 and 200. Of note, only ten Providers have ability to handle more than 200 students at any given time. This is important to note, in comparison to the physical capacity figures, as it is clear that space is rarely an issue, but the number of teachers is the limiting factor.

The following charts compare physical capacity and instructional capacity, first for the AE system overall and then by Region. Statewide, instructional capacity exceeds physical capacity at the lower levels, but lags physical capacity at the higher levels. Among providers in each Region there is greater average physical capacity than instructional capacity.

Figure 9: Instructional Capacity



Overall, the Benchmarking surveys tally a statewide capacity of about 15,206 for program Physical Capacity and 6,915 for Instructional Capacity. While these figures are not exact (many Providers listed a range), they give a close approximation of the system capacity. This data could be compared to figures from the Indiana InTERS system to determine how close to capacity the system is operating, and where significant challenges may exist in utilizing the system to reach the thousands of Hoosiers in need of Adult Education services¹⁹.

Student to Teacher Ratio

When asked what is the maximum number of students a teacher can teach at one time, Providers report a moderate range of answers. A slight majority (36 Providers) report a capacity of 15-20 students per teacher, with a significant portion (22 Providers) saying that teachers can teach between 20-25 and perhaps more students. Of note, a small number (7 Providers) reported that their teacher capacity was fifteen or fewer students. This seems rather a small ratio and for these Providers could be an unnecessary limiting factor on overall program capacity.

¹⁹ Also, see next section on Schedules for plan for further data collection process on capacity and schedules across all Providers, to respond to incomplete and difficult-to-navigate data.

Class Schedules²⁰

Across the state, there appears to be an extensive range of times that classes are available, both morning, afternoon and evening.

AEP Survey, Q53d1 (Coded/Compiled)			
REGIONS	Day	Evening	Morning
1	5	5	5
2	4	5	5
3	6	6	6
4	5	7	6
5	5	6	6
6	3	3	4
7	4	5	5
8	4	3	2
9	(data not available)		
10	3	2	3
11	2	2	1
Grand Total	41	44	43

This table is interesting, in that we see, across Regions, that there is solid “coverage” of the day. Each Region has roughly the same number of Providers offering classes in each timeframe. When considering the data in greater detail, however, we can learn more. Another portion (15 Providers) offer two of the three timeframes, with most of these having either morning or afternoon plus evening hours. We consider this superior to simply offering both “day” shifts and omitting evening hours, due to a desire to accommodate the most diversity of students’ work and family schedules.

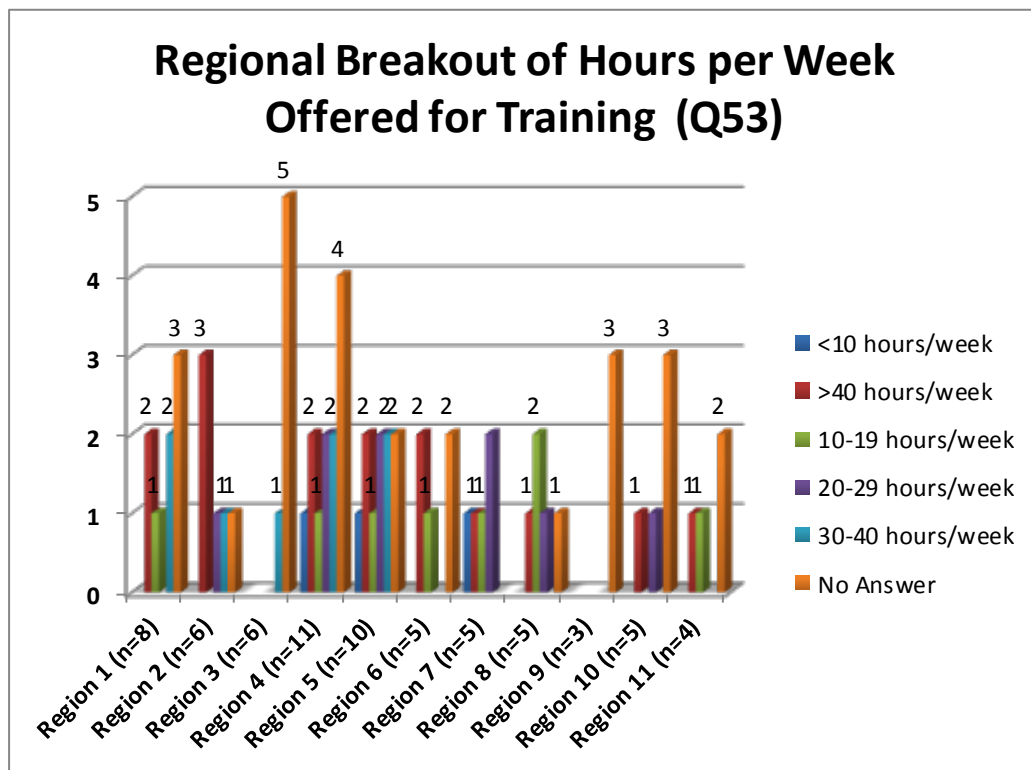
On a related note, Providers offer a wide range of total hours during the week. When reviewing class schedules, it was important not only to consider the times of day, but also the days of the week and overall picture in terms of total hours of class offered. Some Programs offer multiple classes concurrently (for instance, GED preparation and ESL in different classrooms at the same time), so we reviewed the class schedules and considered the total hours that at least one class was offered, and made an unduplicated count of the active hours for each Provider.

Fifteen providers have classes operating for greater than 40 hours per week, but otherwise, programs include as few as seven hours (3 Providers with less than 10 per week) and 8-9 Providers in each of the other time ranges. Of note, data is incomplete (26 did not respond),

²⁰ Some data in this section is limited, as a number of Providers did not supply original class schedules during the interview process, and in a few cases data was difficult to compile into existing categories. See Recommendations for a further discussion.

but it is evident that some Providers offer limited hours of instruction. The Regional breakout shows that there is significant variation of scale within and among Regions. To some degree, this is likely due to different scales (smaller Providers may only offer a few class sessions per week, as they only have a few cohorts or sufficient demand to warrant a few offerings, while very large sites must have many sessions and multiple iterations of each type of class).

Figure 10: Regional Breakout of Hours per Week Offered for Training



Staffing

The Benchmarking process did not explore teacher counts, full-time/part-time teacher ratios, or teacher retention. However, anecdotal comments by Providers suggest that in many Regions there is a challenge of teacher turnover, attracting full-time teachers and teachers able to teach math. (See Teacher Orientation section for more on this.) This could be a valuable area for future Benchmarking to explore more deeply the challenges being faced around Indiana.

Several Providers noted that they know there are more potential students in their communities needing assistance, and many specifically mentioned things like “if I had two more teachers, I could do...” more services and or more specialized programs to meet student needs. It is not “news” that there are not enough services to go around, but capacity needs to be enhanced in order to begin to make a more significant impact on the 930,000 Indiana residents who need some level of Adult Education services.

We recommend that AECs reach out directly to those Providers with significant differences between Physical Capacity and Instructional Capacity, and to those (some of which are the same entities) with significantly lower Student-to-Teacher Ratios and engage in a discussion to explore reasons for the differences, whether there are specific or unique local considerations of student population/capacity or program format that impact these differences. Consider any action that may help Providers alleviate these challenges in order to expand capacity.

Weekend Classes

Consider finding ways to provide weekend Adult Education classes. No Providers offer this, and it appears to be a gap in service, particularly when taking into account that work and family commitments often make day and even evening schedules impossible for many low-income workers who might be targets for Adult Education.

Community college facilities in off-hours

Though space does not seem to be a major factor, accessibility does, in some anecdotal conversations. A number of creative ideas were presented in the interviews, including use of Community Colleges during evenings and even late at night to accommodate second and third shift workers. This is in line with national trends, particularly in an economy with many unemployed workers, where community colleges are working to meet increased demand by offering late night coursework.²¹

We recommend exploring all options of this sort, particularly when it is clear that some workers, due to day and evening work schedules, simply cannot access the existing menu of Adult Education classes.

Workplace Based Classes

For people who are working but have basic education deficiencies, instruction at their jobsite can address a number of issues related to capacity and access. Instruction given at the worksite can be much more accessible than classes at a school or community based organization, and sometimes employers even offer relief time to take classes. This is most likely when the business feels that employees will become more productive. Job-relevance leads to another potential advantage of workplace based instruction – it can be contextualized to occupational needs; general employability skills and in some cases, mastering workplace technologies.

Workplace based classes also can potentially be paid for, at least in part, by the employer. This would be more likely after the Indiana AE system has demonstrated success with some workplace-based courses. But, once having proven their worth, DWD should be able to charge

²¹ College Holds Classes At Midnight To Meet Demand,” National Public Radio Morning Edition, November 10, 2010. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130911603>

businesses for these classes. Income from businesses could be one means of addressing the capacity constriction of not having enough teachers in the AE system.

While there is strong feeling that companies should, in cases where customized services are being provided, help pay for the services, there is clearly value in building this kind of partnership as a means of expanding capacity and also developing potential placement relationships with these firms. We recommend a collaborative effort between Adult Education and WorkOne to identify potential opportunities to build this kind of project with Indiana businesses.

Expand Capacity through Scheduling

A deeper analysis of this data, including gathering class schedules for all Providers and compiling into a comprehensive matrix showing hours, days/schedules, capacity, teacher ratios, could provide opportunities to expand the capacity through scheduling. This may be a time-consuming process and could be undertaken by AECs and EDSI through creation of a statewide spreadsheet to be sent to all Providers for submission, showing availability of each type of class, at each type of timeframe (morning, afternoon, evening, weekend), the total physical and instructional capacity and total hours of “open” time and class time per site. If collected in a standardized format, with separately available service figures for each site, this information could be used to identify specific gaps in service, areas where services are not being provided in enough flexible hours, where teacher to student ratios limit service, or other insights that may arise based on the data gathered. EDSI recommends working with appropriate DWD staff to develop this report format, disseminate to Providers, collect and analyze this data.

3. Performance Management

The Benchmarking survey was not designed to capture information about performance management. However, performance management is a critical function for public programs. It can serve multiple purposes:

- Determine whether the program is achieving its purpose and provide information for performance improvement;
- Inform funding sources (state legislators, federal granting agencies, foundations) of what the program is accomplishing;
- Inform stakeholders and the public.

In view of its critical importance, we have several recommendations concerning performance management:

- Determine what process indicators are most important for the AE system. Ideally this should be done via a Workgroup of AE system staff and teachers along with DWD. Use a formal framework for this investigation, such as the “AIDDE” model (or a similar framework), which starts by looking at outcomes data (statewide, by Region and by

Provider) to deduce what the most important process indicators are. This process should also identify the most important “early indicators” of performance and program output measures.

- Evaluate InTERS usability for day-to-day performance management by staff (coordinators, administrators, teachers, counselors) and adapt or modify InTERS as needed to assure that data and reports are in a user-friendly format and available on a real-time basis so that they can be used by staff to continuously gauge performance.
- Provide training to staff and teachers on how to use data to manage performance and begin a process for DWD and AE Provider Directors, staff and teachers to utilize the data gathered during the Benchmarking study for comparisons with program results as part of an ongoing performance management process and for program evaluation.

D. Findings: Professional Development

Most providers identified the need for Professional Development. In addition to observations and recommendations regarding curriculum development, there were many comments with regard to the need for broad tools and resources to help teachers, many of whom come from public school settings and are less experienced in teaching Adults, to do the best possible job in Adult Education.

Based on discussions between DWD and EDSI and insights from the Benchmarking process, the following activities should be pursued regarding Professional Development:

- Provide Director’s Training.
- Develop a New Teacher Handbook.
- Re-engage teacher mentoring.

The majority (46 of 69) of Providers have a process for orienting new Teachers to their work in Adult Education. Several Providers report the existence of a prior “New Teacher Handbook” that the Department of Education provided to Adult Education Providers and a few suggest that it is online and available to them, though most were not aware of this. Anecdotal comments suggest that this Handbook may have had an online component and was updated periodically as new information, programs, partners or processes came into place.

A number of Providers mentioned a specific need for new teacher training in several areas including:

- Math curriculum development, particularly as some teachers hired into the program do not have significant experience teaching the levels of math required for GED preparation in Adult Education;
- Insights on working with the unique populations of adult learners;

- Motivating adults to learn.

Additionally, several Providers referenced a prior mentoring program for new Directors/ Coordinators (lead staff at a given Provider), wherein each was assigned to a veteran colleague in another region during their initial year or so of work. There was strong desire to bring back, or continue, these processes and a sense that they are important to good ongoing Professional Development within the statewide Adult Education system.

We recommend planning Adult Education Directors' Meetings on a regular basis and developing an overall calendar of Trainings to be held for Adult Education teachers and staff. In addition to management-related topics specifically for Director, they should also be given an overview or "executive" version of training on each of the topics on which teachers are to be trained.

Strongly requested by Adult Education Providers is a joint conference or meeting between WorkOne staff and Adult Education staff. This type of conference would focus on considerations of the relationships between the two systems and how best to deliver coherent, collaborative services to individual Indiana residents. Attendees would include Adult Ed Coordinators, Provider leadership, WorkOne Regional Operators, key Instructors/Teachers, WorkOne Case Managers, WorkOne Academic and Career Counselors, and those in each group with key roles in co-managing customers. Subject matter for the initial Conference should include presentations on best practices by some Regions and Providers with successful efforts in making referrals between the systems, utilizing co-location to build collaboration and enhance services, collaborative case management processes, and WorkINDiana related subject-matter such as development of industry-relevant, sector-focused curricula. Recommend an annual statewide event with potential separate Regional get-togethers on a bi-annual or quarterly basis.

One region has already begun to plan a WorkOne/Adult Ed retreat or conference. This one-day or half-day gathering of the key staff from all AE Providers in the Region and all WorkOnes in the region would be focused on referrals, coordinated services, WorkINDiana programs, recordkeeping/case management and other common issues. Several other Providers requested a statewide conference of this sort to be held regularly (bi-annually was the most common suggestion).

New Teacher Handbook

Under the oversight of the Steering Committee, form a Teacher Orientation Team which would be responsible for developing key content for teacher orientations and preparing a revised "New Teacher Handbook" including template of materials, narrative, bulleted list of content and/or slide deck to be used for initial orientation for new teachers.

Teacher Mentoring

Re-engage the Director mentoring process and consider implementing a parallel New Teacher mentoring process, bringing seasoned Adult Education teachers into partnership with new teachers to provide insights and support, particularly in areas unique to teaching adult learners. These mentoring relationships could be within Provider, but may benefit more from being cross-Provider or even cross-Region contacts. Such interactions have proven in a variety of settings to enhance honest sharing and disclosure of challenges and insights and offer a “safe space” environment as well as bringing to each partner insights from a broader set of perspectives. They do not even need to be “mentoring” in the hierarchical sense but simply pairings of teachers and workers with others around the Region or State.