

California Adult Education Program : Annual Plan : 2021-22 Produced: Aug 12, 2021, 03:45 PM UTC John Parker

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Plans & Goals - Consortium Approved

Executive Summary

The ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium for Adult Education continued implementation of the 3-Year Plan within the restrictions of a full year closure for most of the adult schools due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Some institutions received approval to reopen for in-person classes near the end of the 2020-21 school year. The consortium members placed an emphasis on strategies that addressed the planning goals. Following the direction of the 3-Year Plan, the members identified the following primary goals upon which to focus: 1) Strengthen industry and community partnerships and short-term CTE program offerings; 2) Strengthen the consortium's approach to connection with students, potential students and the community at large; 3) Increase student success by clarifying pathways, expanding opportunities, and supporting students in achieving their goals; 4) Improve data collection and reporting practices to more accurately capture student performance and member/consortium effectiveness. When the 2020-21 Annual Plan goals were developed, it had not been anticipated that in-person instruction would be eliminated for the entire year. This ongoing impact by the pandemic required continual re-evaluation of the practicality of the original goals; and how resources would be directed to accomplish portions of the goals that were reasonable considering the circumstances. The ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium implemented several strategies and demonstrated several successes in addressing two major issues facing the group: 1) 100% reliance on online learning which demonstrated the magnitude of the digital divide among the students as well a lack of access to devices and internet which resulted in; 2) a significant decline in student enrollment. Early in the 2020-21 school year the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium Director began discussions with the Riverside County WDB regarding obtaining CARES Act Funding to assist local adult schools and county offices in their efforts to increase student access to online learning. Eventually \$1 million was distributed throughout Riverside County with \$552,256 awarded to ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium adult schools and county office. This funding was used to purchase hot spots and devices, which were loaned to students who wanted to enroll in classes. This resulted in an increase in the number of students who were enrolled and persisted in online learning. Schools were also able to provide CTE instruction online. Classes in Pharmacy Technician and Medical Billing were adapted to an online modality. This allowed students within these programs to obtain certifications and employment. One school also modified its Job Skills program that was developed to provide job skills training for substitute custodians and Nutritional Services workers. This training program was also offered online. The consortium implemented weekly Distance Learning Office Hours Zoom meetings during which members could discuss challenges and successes related to distance learning and increasing student participation. The consortium's community college district established several virtual activities designed to increase connections with students and providing support to students in achieving their goals. The improvement of data collection and reporting practices, while still important to the consortium members, became less of a priority as consortium leaders primary concerns involved converting programs to online instruction exclusively, providing students in need with the tools to access online programming, and providing support to students and staff members to ensure as positive a learning experience as possible through technology.

Regional Planning Overview

The ABOUT STUDENTS consortium will continue to implement the 2019-22 3-Year plan during the 2021-22 school year, but primarily the focus of each consortium member will be on what student enrollment, student needs and student progress will be in a post-pandemic school world. It is unknown what attendance numbers will be in the fall and although schools have been surveying their students regarding preferences on the type of instruction they would utilize when school resumes, this is an unprecedented experience for adult education staff and students. For at least the first semester, week-to-week, if not day-to-day changes in learning modalities for various classes and programs will be the norm. Two of the current 3-year plan goals: Strengthening the consortium's approach to connection with students, potential students, and the community-at-large; and Increasing student success by clarifying pathways, expanding opportunities, and supporting students in achieving their goals will be extremely critical considerations when the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium members reopen their schools this fall. Consortium members will re-establish CTE programs that were reduced or suspended during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Data collection practices will be critical during the 2021-22 school year considering the impact that the pandemic had on not only on enrollment numbers, but on persistence and documented skills gains also. The Focus Forward outreach project that was

developed during the first half of the 2020-21 school year and was intended to substantially increase the consortium's connection to the region's students. However, the launch of the campaign occurred just weeks prior to the shutdown of the schools, and the intended benefits never materialized. The Focus Forward project will be critical for the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium during 2021-22 as the members look to reopen the schools and attempt to rebuild their student enrollment numbers toward pre-pandemic levels.

Meeting Regional Needs

Regional Need #1

Gaps in Service / Regional Needs

The decline in enrollment as a direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic is not only a local area of concern, but statewide as well. As members make plans for reopening schools, there are no previous experiences to fall back on regarding adult students returning to school following a 16-month shut-down. Student health and mental wellness concerns and personal circumstances will impact their decision to return to school and the modality of instruction they prefer. Although the consortium has implemented a regional student recruitment campaign and is expanding its presence on social media, it remains to be seen how much enrollment numbers will increase for the fall as compared to the previous year. Plans to provide in-person instruction, online instruction, and blended or hybrid version of both are being developed by each member and will vary from community to community within the consortium's service area. It is almost assured that creativity, flexibility and adaptability will be critical in the consortium's efforts to increase enrollment.

How do you know? What resources did you use to identify these gaps?

The drop in enrollment has been an ongoing issue for consortia throughout the state since March 2020. Student Enrollment reports generated through TOPSpro Enterprise (TE) empirically demonstrate the significant decline in student enrollment since the initial school closures in March 2020, and the complete closure during the 2020-21 school year. Compared to the 2018-19 school year, there was about a forty-five percent enrollment decrease, according to TE reports, during 2019-20. Members will continuously monitor and compare enrollment numbers and persistence to evaluate effectiveness of outreach strategies.

How will you measure effectiveness / progress towards meeting this need?

As schools reopen for the 2021-22 school year members will implement strategies, within the reopening protocols established by each member's governing board, to begin rebuilding program enrollments. Initial enrollment patterns will also provide important information for members to use in determining program scheduling strategies that will help further increase the numbers as quickly as is possible.

Gaps In Service

New Strategies

Strategy #1

To address the need for English language literacy development for immigrants in the region, the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium will continue to offer, and where appropriate, increase instruction and services to non-native English speakers. Courses may include English as a Second Language, citizenship preparation, speaking and pronunciation, grammar and writing, or vocational courses for English language learners.

Strategy #2

To address the need for basic skill development in the region, the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium will continue to offer, and where appropriate, increase instruction and services to appropriate candidates needing skill development in basic literacy. Courses may include adult basic education, high school diploma completion, high school equivalency preparation for students lacking secondary completion and proficiency.

Strategy #3

To address the need for short-term career technical education in the region, the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium will continue to offer and increase instruction and services in areas of career development. Courses may include medical assisting, welding, auto machining, computer technology, and more.

Strategy #4

Continuing to provide and expand academic advisement services is an important component of student success. Members of the consortium will provide academic counseling, transition to post-secondary advisement, and other support students need to continue on their path to advancement.

Strategy #5

To increase the capacity and expansion of services offered in Basic Skills, Immigrant Services, Short-term CTE, and Workforce Preparation, members of the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium have developed an outreach plan to more effectively recruit students into programs of high need in the region. Outreach activities include website development connecting referrals to services, participation in local events such as town hall meetings, parent advisory meetings, community events, business group activities such as Chamber of Commerce and association meetings, local job fairs, and more. Members will continue to distribute outreach materials and publications while adding or continuing digital connections using social media.

Strategy #6

Providing alternative means of study to adult education students is another strategy identified by the members of the consortium. Some of the alternative methods of study planned in the region include online learning, hybrid course offerings, and other digital support for increasing access for potential students. Tutoring outside the classroom will also be offered to students to provide additional learning opportunities.

Seamless Transitions

New Strategies

Strategy #1

The ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium members have established transition practices within the county office, school and college districts to support the transition of students between institutions. Members of the consortium will continue to expand the collaboration among members and partners to assist students to transition to post-secondary opportunities and the work place. Some of the transition support activities include providing college tours for students, advisement from college transition specialists, hosting workshops on FAFSA and trainings for college applications and financial aid.

Strategy #2

Another strategy to support transitioning students between programs such as ESL, ABE, ASE and CTE is to conduct routine testing cycles assessing student progress and level advancement readiness. By providing students with frequent progress assessment, students can better set and strive for goals that support learning achievement and advancement within levels.

Strategy #3

To support workforce bound students, members will continue to provide workshops on resume writing, interviewing skills, and re-entry training targeting job skill development and job attainment. Members support students transitioning to the workforce by connecting education and labor.

Strategy #4

As one of the goals in the 3-Year Plan indicates, the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium will work to strengthen industry and community partnerships. Members will continue to develop relationships with local businesses through job fairs, meet and greet opportunities, and on-site interviewing sessions. Some members will hire dedicated staff members to support career development and job navigation.

Student Acceleration

New Strategies

Strategy #1

Members of the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium plan to continue or implement technology integration into course offerings within varying programs and levels of instruction. Extending learning opportunities outside the classroom using online applications will assist with accelerating student progress. Using online programs such as Burlington English, Canvas online learning management system, Google Classroom platforms and more, connects students to additional digital resources that support learning opportunities and student goal attainment.

Strategy #2

A strategy being implemented to accelerate student progress by some members is to integrate English language and literacy development with contextualized learning with career pathways. Members will use delivery models appropriate for their capability to provide integrated educational opportunities for students. Agencies will share best practices and resources to support regional success to accelerating student progress.

Strategy #3

Advising students using an individualized study plan is a strategy continuing for some members and being implemented by others. Counselors, advisors, teachers and support staff can be effectively influential in supporting student achievement by assisting with goal setting and study planning. Members will share concepts and practices to best meet the needs of their students within the means of its operations.

Strategy #4

Increasing student success by clarifying pathways, expanding opportunities and supporting students in achieving their goals is another identified goal in the 3-Year Plan. Members plan to increase options for articulation and concurrent enrollment. Connecting and offering courses that directly lead to employment and post-secondary education will support upward mobility for students on the educational journey.

Strategy #5

To improve and accelerate student success, consortium members will form workgroups consisting of internal stakeholders to share best practices and make recommendations for needed changes to programs and processes to improve outcomes. Each member will identify the appropriate workgroups, resources needed, and activities to address its program development objectives.

Professional Development

New Strategies

Strategy #1

The ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium will continue to host an annual conference for its members and their staff, if allowable. During the annual conference, participants have the opportunity to share best practices, attend workshops presented by subject experts, and network within the region. The annual conference connects all regional staff and provides valuable networking opportunities.

Strategy #2

Another strategy to build capacity among consortium members is to establish teams focused on regional growth to equip staff with the support and tools needed for program improvement. A team will be established to target regional policies and practices effective for data gathering and accountability reporting. Additional teams will be considered that focus on student persistence and outcomes.

Strategy #3

Participation and attendance at professional development opportunities offered through CAEP TAP, CALPRO, OTAN, and CASAS will continue with most members in the consortium. Local workshops and internal trainings will be attended when appropriate, including networking and collaboration meetings. Local and state conferences will be attended by members, including the CAEP Summit.

Strategy #4

The ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium sponsors an annual Leadership Retreat for the official representatives and one other staff member. The Leadership Retreat provides meetings that include strategizing and networking, planning activities for the upcoming year, as well as team building. The retreat is an important part of the region's efforts to work collaboratively and share in the regional adult education efforts.

Leveraging Resources

New Strategies

Strategy #1

Increasing opportunities with school districts facilities to provide services for adult students is an ongoing opportunity for many of our members. By providing short-term CTE classes on high school campuses or ESL classes at other school campuses, members have been able to increase services to their students and will continue to explore additional usages on district campuses. Partnership with the neighboring districts and continuation high schools, which offers CTE classes during the day, will continue to benefit adult students and communities.

Strategy #2

Adult Education funding will be braided with college financial resources to develop, and ensure the necessary infrastructure for, noncredit certificates, individual counseling to prospective students after they have worked with an advisor to advance to the final stages of the matriculation process, and support the outreach services that complement the educational advising offered at the adult schools

Strategy #3

Adult school and college members will continue to work together to share facilities and ensure easier access to services for potential college transitions. Individual educational advisors from each of the member colleges work with transitioning students and conduct workshops at adult school classrooms and campus facilities.

Strategy #4

Members have partnerships with community organizations and educational institutions, such as the AUMT Institute ("The Phlebotomy School"). Adult students benefit from the instruction, the certification, and assistance with job placement after completing the course. Other partnerships with United Way, local cities, the Department of Public Social Services, and more provide classroom space with little or no cost to the member.

Strategy #5

A member partners with a temporary employment agency for job placement for students who have completed portions of CTE coursework. Students can earn work experience while being paid.

Strategy #6

A member collaborates with Riv-Co Probation Dept. to increase ASE offering. Probation staff at community correction sites recruit and enroll their clients in CTE offerings at their sites.

Strategy #7

A member partners with the Riverside County Youth Treatment Facility (YTEC) to provide CTE online and workforce readiness skills to 18-year old transitional students who have already completed diploma or HSE.

Fiscal Management

A narrative justifying how the planned allocations are consistent with the annual adult education plan which is based on your CAEP 3-year plan.

Members of the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium utilize the planned allocations to provide instruction and support services in accordance to CAEP guidelines. Allocations will be spent in direct alignment with the goals identified in the 2021/22 Annual and 3-Year Plans. Funding to support personnel and program development and expansion involves the majority of planned expenses. The consortium is determined to focus funding resources to prepare students for academic growth, transition, or workforce. Increasing student persistence and retention, increasing access for students during school closures, connecting with community through outreach and student support services, aligning transitions and pathways, continue to be the emphasis of the ABOUT STUDENTS Consortium. The funding allocation will be spent exclusively on the described activities, which will advance the consortium's goals of preparing students for higher education and the workforce. All members of the consortium designate their CAEP allocation to provide instruction and support services to students enrolled in basic skills, secondary education, English as a Second Language, and short-term Career Technical Education programs.

An approach to incorporating remaining carry-over funds from prior year(s) into strategies planned for 2021-22.

Consortium members utilize carry-over funds from prior years to complete activities planned in program development. Quarterly, members received regional reports that inform them of percentage of annual expenditures by agency to assist with fiscal management and reduction of carryover funds. As directed by the CAEP Office, members expend funds with the "first in, first out" process. Members are currently evaluating the fiscal impact of recent events and establishing plans to target resources in priorities which align with the 21/22 Annual Plan. Some priorities include the hiring of additional staff and instructors, purchasing equipment and materials that can support varying instruction modalities, investing in technical professional development for all staff, and capitalizing on outreach expenses that will promote programs to students most in need with the legislative approval of 4.05% COLA, members' allocations will be increased based on previous percentage of regional allocations. Carryover funds will be spent down to adjust to increasing costs of operations and used to maintain and sustain the programs and services which have been established.

Certification

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