

Issue #1 May 11, 2009

Welcome to the first edition of CAAL's E-News. Each issue will bring you news about CAAL's activities and publications, as well as complementary work by other groups, and occasional feature articles. Most of CAAL's work since last June, when *Reach Higher, America* was released, is intended to advance the recommendations of the National Commission on Adult Literacy.



In Brief

- During the past 10 months, Commissioners and CAAL staff have made presentations about the Commission's findings and recommendations in nearly 30 adult education, workforce development, and state planning venues across the country.
- Since last July, *Reach Higher, America* has been reviewed online or downloaded from the Commission's website at the rate of 1,000 per week. [View the full report and related peripherals.](#)
- On February 12th, Commissioner Morton Bahr testified on behalf of the Commission before the House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness. On May 5th, Commissioner David Beré, President of the Dollar General Corporation, testified before that same Committee. Copies of the testimony are available at the CAAL website (under Publications) as items NC-CAAL4, NC-CAAL5, NC-CAAL6, and NC-CAAL7. [Click here.](#)

Technology Project In Progress. A CAAL project is underway to flesh out the technology recommendations of *Reach Higher, America*. Mary McCain, President of TechVision 21, is the study director. She is supported by a working group and advice from stakeholder groups and others. CAAL will release a report by early fall to help federal and state policy and planning groups. The report will contain a primer on the various tools of technology and the instructional and management

purposes to which they are best suited. It will also provide information on proven models, and offer recommendations on how to use technology to take adult education and workforce skills services to scale, including curriculum development, staff training, overcoming barriers to implementation, costs, and meeting the unmet research agenda.

Workforce Readiness Credential Launched. The National Association of Manufacturing (NAM) through The Manufacturing Institute is partnering with ACT on a Manufacturing Skills Certification System to increase the number of qualified workers. The joint initiative will align industry-recognized skills certifications with career and education pathways. The first release of the System focuses on core or basic personal effectiveness skills, academic competencies, general workplace skills, and industry-wide technical skills required by employers in all sectors of manufacturing. The System is based on the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate, which will assure manufacturers that adults who wish to enter the workforce after high school or postsecondary education have the basic competencies for employment. [Click here for more information.](#)

NIFL Online Learning Report. In October 2008, the National Institute for Literacy released *Investigating the Language and Literacy Skills Required for Independent Online Learning*, a new study by Heidi Silver-Pacuilla (American Institutes for Research) with original analysis by Stephen Reder (Portland State University). This study provides encouraging news about the capacity of adults with low basic skills to use the Internet for learning as well as challenges for program planners. [It is available from the NIFL website.](#)



Point of View

Workforce Organizations Moving Toward Consensus on WIA Reauthorization

The Senate H.E.L.P. Committee held "Listening Sessions" in November 2008 and April 2009 to gather views about changes needed to improve the current Workforce Investment Act. Over 100 participants presented their ideas and learned about strategies for improving WIA legislation and programs.

Six diverse types of organizations gave presentations: workforce development entities, unions, business groups, rehab and disability advocates, educational organizations, and policy groups. Dozens of topics were discussed, with a strong call for:

- Alignment and close collaboration of WIA Titles I & II and other workforce-oriented programs, coupled with alignment of programs with state and regional plans for economic development.
- Much greater funding for workforce education and training programs, as well as pre-employment efforts.
- Separate funding of One-Stop infrastructures and elimination of the Sequence of Services mandate (to free-up funding and provide more effective employer and worker-based instructional programming).
- Comprehensive services to incumbent workers, especially entry-level employees, and those in jeopardy of losing their jobs because of lower basic skills.
- Much more attention to the critical need for development and use of better, more work-oriented assessments, measurements, and documentation of program outcomes.
- Career path education and training opportunities, especially those leading to industry-recognized and sector-based certification and two-year college degrees.

There was a striking consensus about these concerns and strategies, which are generally consistent with the Commission's major recommendations in *Reach Higher, America*. The Listening Sessions reflected long-standing concerns about the legislative mandates, funding, implementation, and federal oversight of Workforce Investment Act provisions and pointed to the need for major changes in the Act.

COMING SOON

Results of a Readiness Roundtable co-sponsored by CAAL
and the National Center on Education and the Economy;
status of the legislative initiative sponsored by
Congressmen Patrick Kennedy and Reuben Hinojosa.

**E-News is made possible by support from the Dollar General Corporation,
the Joyce Foundation, the Wal-Mart Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation,
The McGraw-Hill Companies, and Harold W. McGraw, Jr. and other individual donors.**

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