

## LARAEC ABE 2017 MID-YEAR REPORT

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS and FOCUS GROUPS

**Task:** *Conduct a Student Focus Group and gather input from students.*

#### Progress on Task

It is vital to keep students at the center of all LARAEC projects, and the Demographics and Student Focus Group Project did just that.

- The questions the SMEs from the 4 Districts – BUSD, CCUSD, LAUSD, and MUSD - asked students were a collaborative effort. Each district shared insights with ABE workgroup members each of whom work closely with students every day and understand students' goals and challenges.
- All four districts conducted separate focus groups and uploaded the findings on Schoology. This was a very efficient system and worked well.
- Three consistent student recommendations across all 4 districts were that Districts:  
(a) provide a Beginning Reading course; (b) offer more teacher-directed group classes in both ELA and Math (and fewer independent study classes); and (c) make available free child care.

#### Difficulties and Recommendations

There are two areas that would be helpful in future planning:

- insight into long-term vision so that we know why we're doing what we're doing. For example, our group struggled with the purpose and benefit of the focus group because we didn't understand how it fit into the long-range plan. Once we understood, our plan of action fell into place.
- offer a face-to-face tutorial on Schoology. Some SME members may need additional help getting up-to-speed for the second part of the project.

### ASSESSMENT ALIGNMENT and INTEGRATION

**Tasks:** *1. Evaluate current assessments and propose up to three courses of action designed to align and integrate assessments in the LARAEC region.*  
*2. Develop a Regional Assessments Crosswalk*

#### Progress on Tasks

- ABE SMEs from 4 Districts determined the purposes of our assessments: (a) place students into our Adult Basic Education programs; and (b) promote students into our Adult Secondary Education (ASE)/High School Equivalency (HSE) Preparation programs.
- ABE SMEs from 4 Districts cataloged which assessment systems each agency/district is currently using. All agreed that there should be at least two systems available for use by adult schools, and preferably a third option. We found that there was alignment between two of the major assessment systems, CASAS and TABE Reading and Math, and a third system being piloted at this time, BASI (data still being collected).
- ABE SMEs from 4 Districts charted the level alignments among the assessment systems, noted strengths and weaknesses, and included them in our Assessment Alignment and Integration Findings Report.

- As we continue to address recommendations from our Findings Report and gather more information about specific expectations, we will develop a Regional Assessment Crosswalk this Spring 2017.

### **Difficulties and Recommendations**

- ABE SMEs did not have sufficient time to do in-depth examination of the assessment tools. We spent valuable time sifting through differing information about appropriateness of assessments for use with differing populations. It would be helpful to include an expert in CASAS, TABE, and BASI in our ABE Workgroup as we continue our work with assessments.
- Specific expectations about the Regional Assessment Crosswalk will be needed for our work to progress.

### **MODULARIZED VABE MATH CURRICULUM**

***Task: Evaluate CTE pathways to determine new entry points for ABE Math students.***

***Subtasks include the development and alignment of modularized VABE Math curricula for each of the six existing CTE Pathways.***

### **Progress on Tasks**

- Each LARAEC district – BUSD, CCUSD, LAUSD, and MUSD - has submitted its MATH Curriculum and Course Outlines on the Schoology LARAEC ABE Resource Page and begun a preliminary review of course competencies.
- An analysis of Student Focus Group responses has confirmed a need for contextualized math instruction is real. Most students surveyed have CTE goals, but because they have been placed in Beginning Math, their training pathways will take longer to complete.

### **Difficulties and Recommendations**

- A greater understanding among SMEs of the six existing CTE pathways is needed.
- Utilizing the same process to align curriculum for Reading, English language Arts, and Math curricula is needed.
- It is recommended development of Modularized VABE Math Curriculum begin by comparing expected math competencies for individual pathways with existing ABE Math course outlines. The result would be more focused ABE Math courses for students taken in conjunction with training pathways requiring developmental math skills.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND READING CURRICULA ALIGNMENT

- Tasks:**
- 1. Evaluate the need for curriculum alignment.*
  - 2. Evaluate content, sequence, and purpose of existing curricula.*
  - 3. Develop curriculum report and proposals that provide at least 2 or 3 options designed to meet needs of students.*
  - 4. Evaluate feasibility of ABE level 1 Literacy*

### **Progress on Task**

- Each LARAEC district – BUSD, CCUSD, LAUSD, and MUSD - has submitted its MATH Curriculum and Course Outlines on the Schoology LARAEC ABE Resource Page and begun a preliminary review of course competencies.
- An analysis of Student Focus Group responses has confirmed a need at their schools and in their communities for ABE Beginning-Level Reading classes.

### **Difficulties and Recommendations: English Language Arts**

- BUSD, CCUSD, LAUSD, and MUSD have places for students to access curriculum that addresses listening and oral skills, grammar, usage, mechanics, and composition. However, student placement is inconsistent: skills may be taught at ESL-level, ABE-level, or ASE-level.
- There were ABE Focus Group participants not proficient in English raising concern about the ABE student-assessment/placement process. Clear differentiation between ESL-level students and ABE-level students needs to be established.
- It is recommended that (a) LARAEC Districts operate from a clear definition and profile of the ABE student to assure proper placement; (b) modules of specific English Language Arts skills be integrated into courses within the Six Career Pathways; and (c) work continue on alignment of English language arts curriculum across our Districts based on expected student competencies.

### **Difficulties and Recommendations: ABE Reading**

- 1 District offers 3 levels of ABE developmental reading courses – Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced - for the non-reader up to the 8.9 grade-level equivalency reader.
- 1 District provides developmental reading instruction within its English Language Arts curriculum: Intermediate English Language Arts for the 3.0-4.9 reader and Advanced English Language Arts for the 5.0 – 6.9 reader.
- It is recommended that the LARAEC ABE Program offer 3 levels of teacher-directed developmental reading instruction: for the 0-3.9 GLE reader, \* the 4.0 -6.9 reader, and the 7.0 – 8.9 reader.

## PILOT PROGRAMS

**Task:** *Gather information on all the Pilot programs that are being conducted in ABE within the Burbank, Los Angeles, Montebello, and Culver City unified school districts to evaluate their similarities and effectiveness in helping our ABE populations.*

### Progress on Task

Each district is currently running different pilot programs to be evaluated at the end of the academic schoolyear.

- **Burbank USD**
  - Intervention English and math pilot programs- Initially intended for additional support for high school diploma ELA and Math students - it is now open to ABE students as well.
- **Culver City USD**
  - *AZTEC Foundations*, an independent study contract 30-60 minutes a week; is offered to students reading between a 2.0 GLE and a 3.9 GLE as per TABE M Reading.
  - *AZTEC Bridges*, an independent study contract 30-60 minutes a week, is offered to students reading between a 4.0 GLE to a 6.0 GLE as per the TABE M Reading.
- **Los Angeles USD**
  - AZTEC Bridges Pre-HiSet Preparation
  - BURLINGTON English Distance Learning
  - Integrated Training for Electricians
  - Integrated Training for Photovoltaic Installers
- **Montebello USD**
  - *GradPoint* is an online curriculum currently being used in an ABE/ASE teacher-directed group class as well as independent study for English Language Arts, U.S. History, U.S. Government, and some select courses.
  - *BASI* is an assessment program whose reading levels correlate with CASAS and TABE grade-level competencies. Reading levels can be adjusted for each ABE/ASE student or group. Its clear competency scores offer a valuable solution to guidelines for student promotion.

### Difficulties and Recommendations

The ABE Workgroup members freely shared information on their pilot programs and will continue to monitor and evaluate them throughout the school year.

- The ABE Workgroup will assess the findings of each pilot program and report on the data.
- The ABE Workgroup feels it is premature to make any recommendations until more data is available.