



**Act 78: Adult Education and Literacy HSCP
Student Access Study Committee -
October 24, 2023, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting
Call In: 802-552-8456
Conference ID: 396 751 146#

**APPROVED
MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Catherine Kalkstein, Central Vermont Adult Basic Education; Mary-Katherine Stone, Vermont House of Representatives; Martine Gulick, Vermont Senate; Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity; Jess DeCarolis, Vermont Agency of Education; Mike McGraith, Vermont Principals' Association

AOE: Suzanne Sprague

Others: Michelle Faust, Marty Feltus, Robin Castle

Meeting called to order at 3:33 p.m. Minutes taken by Xusana Davis.

Agenda

1. 3:30 p.m. Call to Order, Roll Call, Amendments to Agenda
2. 3:35 p.m. Approval of October 3, 2023 Minutes
3. 3:35 p.m. Public Comment
4. 3:45 p.m. Update on AOE and AELN Conversation on AEL funding
5. 4:10 p.m. Goals and Proposals for Report
6. 4:40 p.m. Next Steps
7. 4:50 p.m. Public Comment
8. 5:00 p.m. Adjourn

Approval of Oct 03, 2023 Minutes

- Motion to approve: Martine GULICK
- Second: Mary-Katherine STONE
- Vote Outcomes
 - Aye: [STONE, GULICK, Xusana DAVIS, Catherine KALKSTEIN, Jess DECAROLIS, Mike MCRAITH]
 - Nay: [None]
 - Abstain: [None]
- Result: Minutes approved.

Recap of Working Group's Prior Discussions to Date

- Chair reviews the group's statutory charge and the previous discussions of the working group, including
 - The importance of securing a funding structure that works for providers and adequately addresses the need
 - The importance of approaching the work with a focus on adult learners

- DECAROLIS: What are the barriers to accessing adult education? There is likely agreement about the goals and the vision for adult education; the disagreement is likely limited to the level and complexity of the need (specifically as it relates to funding needs), which ends up constraining the system. When we get into recommendations that are separate from the legislatively-needed changes, there will be opportunity to think through those options. Of all the avenues to a secondary credential that adult education has always supported, there are additional ways we could add to the offerings and collaborate with others to expand access to industry credentials. To reinvest in adult education as part of the workforce development system will be critical for the Governor and for the state.
- MCRAITH: How does all this interact with the high school completion program's objectives and structure?
 - KALKSTEIN: The high school completion program is more of a fee-for-service model.
 - DECAROLIS: When the adult education statute was re-designated, the different funding streams were listed but in reality they come from the same place. So the high school completion program is governed by a specific set of rules but is funded from the Ed Fund and the adult diploma program is funded through General Fund. There can be statutory language changes to the adult diploma program that better explains that there is a difference between the adult education and literacy statute versus a different bespoke program.
 - GULICK: When we look at per-pupil spending, we should consider what the overhead costs are, the success rates, test scores, and all those metrics. Where do these data exist?
 - DECAROLIS: Some of this information exists in the public sphere, and other information is available through historic measurement over time. This is a great example of how we can make this process less piecemeal. Different data systems and different programs being governed by different rules where the same individuals operate in multiple spaces makes it complicated to track costs. However, we can identify students who are supported through the Ed Fund who are not enrolled in school and who are engaged in multiple flexible pathways. Overall, when it comes to how we identify the support of the program that's already in law in the adult diploma program and then outlined in section 4011, I believe, the funding is predicated on 26% of the base rate per individual who is assessed and part of the assessment program. We can also model what that looks like and clarify how from multiple sources, we're still not meeting how that's spelled out in law and that the structure of the funding--and particularly the high school completion program and its source of funds--has contributed to creating this instability for the system.
 - KALKSTEIN: We at the network can provide information to give a sense of what it costs to provide our program/services.
 - DECAROLIS: We can also share some reports from the Auditor's Office to add to that information.
 - MCRAITH: How easily is the ELL work broken down in terms of funding and success rates? The federal funding is connected to supporting ELL students and adult learners.
 - KALKSTEIN: It's a little comingled in the sense that we can quantify how many students we've served. It would be challenging to isolate exactly how many dollars per pupil were spent, for that reason.
 - GULICK: For the money coming out of the Ed Fund, how is it being allocated to various students? Will these students benefit from the pupil weighting formula?
 - DECAROLIS: Ed funds cannot be direct granted to non-LA. AOE has to administer on behalf of school districts the payment based on those services. Services are delivered at the local level, reported up to AOE, and AOE routes it

to the Finance division, which distributes payment to school districts and providers. A very small portion of funds go to school districts for unenrolled students who are in the high school completion program who may be receiving services from school district. AOE hopes to say there is an avenue for a achieving a secondary credential for any adult through the adult diploma program with some minor revisions to statute. For instance, there are two definitions of "adult," even within that same statute: one defines adult as 16 years old, one defines adult as 20 years old. It is not correct to be treated as an appendage to the K-12 system versus a system that provides adult education governed by a set of rules and a value in their own right, and particularly to the workforce system. AOE questions why this distinction exists and it appears common preference is to use the 16-years-old measure. You can get a GED if you're 16, but can only get a diploma through this pathway if you're 20.

- Result: The working group members want to see more data regarding overhead costs, success rates, per-pupil spending. The working group will also wait for a report-back from KALKSTEIN from a soon-to-be-held meeting with AOE for further insight into the current system and its administration.

Public Comment

- Marty Feltus: Member of the Board of Directors of the NEK Learning Services and former legislator who served on House Appropriations committee for 8 years. There are about 300 students who utilize our services at NEK Learning Services. The adult basic education is the first step for people to get into a lot of the workforce training programs that the state is spending millions of dollars on. The programming leads to the important end result of cultural diversity and economic prosperity for our state's population.
- Robin Castle: I want to express my support for the committee's approach to this and looking at statute and perhaps reducing some of the complications of our system.

Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn: MCRAITH
- Second: GULICK
- Vote Outcomes: All vote aye.
- Meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.
- Next Meeting Date: November 14, 2023 (3:30-5:00 p.m.)

Action Items

- Kalkstein: Work with AOE to develop proposal for a possible funding solution for the group to review and respond to.
- DECAROLIS: If available, provide a clarifying document that helps illustrate the flow or process of how the AOE administers the payments for providers/programs.

Acronyms Used

- AOE: Agency of Education
- Ed Fund: the state's Education Fund
- NEK: Northeast Kingdom