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NAEPDC



News, Views, and Clues

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Joint Statement of the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE) and the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE): A New Partnership to Grow Adult Education

Today we are pleased to announce that COABE and the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education are partnering in an advocacy effort to strengthen and grow Adult Education.

The purpose of the NCSDAE is to attend to its members' legislative needs and concerns, to work with other adult education organizations to exchange ideas and solve common problems, and to establish and maintain a nationwide communication network regarding national policy and legislative issues.

COABE is organized to advance national and international adult education and literacy opportunities for all persons. Its more than 15,000 members include adult educators, administrators, and mentors working to improve educational outcomes for adults.

Beverly Smith, Chair of the Council of State Directors noted, "The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) places new responsibilities on Adult Educators that require additional resources. We are excited to be working with COABE to make our policy makers more aware of the key role that Adult Education plays in enhancing our nation's competitiveness and our citizens more active and engaged."

Art Ellison, New Hampshire State Director and Co-Chair of the State Directors' Policy Committee noted "some 36 million working age Americans have low literacy skills, and more than 60 million can't perform simple math and we need to improve their skills so they can compete for meaningful employment with family sustaining wages, lead their families and contribute to their communities."

According to COABE President Tom Nash, "We all know that advocacy is important to the health and well-being of the field. Effective advocacy will ensure that legislators, funders, and the general community are aware of the important work that we are all undertaking each and every day to make our country a better place to live, grow, and prosper."

Polly Smith, COABE's Public Policy Chair and Sharon Bonney, COABE's Executive Director, summed up the joint agenda as "advocating for more funds, more classes, and an end to waiting lists." They said "Adult Education state grants have been reduced by more than 25%, in real dollars, since 2002. In the meantime, other nations are fast outperforming America in boosting the educational levels of their young and working age adults.

According to PIAAC (OECD's Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies), Americans lag behind the international average for basic skills in literacy and numeracy and "problem-solving in technology-rich environments (defined as "using digital technology, communication tools and networks to acquire and evaluate information, communicate with others and perform practical tasks"). Worse still, the U.S. is losing ground. The United States is the only free-market country where the current generation is less well educated than the previous one. We must reverse this trend if we are to successfully compete in the world economy of the

21st century.” The 50 State Directors and COABE’s 15,000 members across the nation are dedicated to working together to expand access to Adult Education, promote professional development, and support high quality research about the role that Adult education is playing, and can play, in strengthening our Nation’s economy and civil society through civics education.

Both organizations agree that this new partnership will make our advocacy efforts more robust, focused and effective as we work together to better our members and our students.

For more information, please contact:

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Keep up the good work. Let me know when we can help.

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