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**From:** Patricia Tyler <ptyler@naepdc.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 24, 2017 12:39 PM  
**Subject:** FW: NVC Joint Letter from COABE/NAEPDC/NCSDAE

**NAEPDC**



*News, Views, and Clues*

May 24, 2017

Dear Friends,

As you are likely aware, the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) and the National Council of the State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE) very intentionally entered into a formal partnership in September 2016 to provide leadership for the field in advocacy, communication, and professional development. Between the two organizations, we represent the nearly 55,000 educators and professionals serving in the field of adult education.

**We want to be very clear that NCSDAE has not abandoned the SPOC network, but rather is investing heavily into it because we recognize the value that each of you as SPOC participants bring in getting the important messages out to the field. We also want to be clear that NCSDAE communications are to come from the respective Executive Directors of our organizations, not a member of any committee in order to ensure the accurate conveyance of information. Our efforts to support you and provide you with pertinent information have been made more difficult by some recently circulated notices which are not only contrary to what we have noted but are also incorrect. Additionally, we are finding it difficult to keep you informed from our central offices due to duplicative messages that are not approved by the NCSDAE and COABE but are being sent utilizing our SPOC network. We do not wish to inundate you with the same information that we are working on disseminating, and so it has become a very unfortunate situation. Please know that we are continuing to work on this issue behind the scenes and are greatly embarrassed by the incorrect information that has been shared to date.**

**Please see below for our initial statement on this matter by NCSDAE Chair, Beverly Smith. We will be sending out more information shortly, but in the meantime respectfully request retraction of erroneous information that is being circulated regarding our joint partnership and desire to maintain our SPOC as well as a high level of advocacy and communication.**

We have invested in our efforts in a number of ways. First and foremost, we are embarking on a national public awareness campaign in an effort to raise awareness with legislators, funders, and

our communities about the importance of adult education. Our goal is to bring the field together around a common mantra, that when we educate, we elevate. We have taken the approach that it is important to invest in adult education versus the old “don’t cut” model. At our recent conference, a group of Adult Education leaders from across the nation agreed that the approach themed as Adult Education: An Investment in America’s Future has a much greater likelihood of resonating in today’s policy arena.

There are a number of facets to this campaign, including a robust tool that enables our field to utilize a [sophisticated rapid response mechanism](#) for issues that require action involving outreach to legislators and their staff. Additionally, we are in the process of developing a toolkit which will be shared with the field in June, along with a video highlighting the importance of adult education. We will be holding four educational webinars on how to effectively advocate for adult education. This is in addition to a national Thought Leaders Meeting we held at the COABE conference, Capitol Hill Days where we invite state directors, state association leaders, practitioners, and students to meet with legislators and their staff, providing ongoing legislative alerts, reports, and also holding a joint advocacy webinar in January that had over 1,500 registrations and received a 4.9 star rating from attendees.

We will continue to ramp up our advocacy and communication efforts and hope that you will also join us as we educate and elevate our students and the field of adult education.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Tyler

Sharon Bonney

Executive Director  
NCSDAE

Executive Director  
COABE

Sent May 22, 2017

Dear Colleagues in Adult Education -

It is unfortunate that this message to the SPOC went out without the full context of the discussion or the true meaning behind a decision that is fully mischaracterized.

Let it be clear that there is NO intention to abandon the SPOC Network or the cause for which we fight. The SPOC Network is an important part of our association as an information forum and a vehicle through which we are able to share a call for action. The Executive Committee appreciates the work that has been done over the past thirteen years to advocate for our students and adult education, in general. We all know that when you forget your history tends to repeat itself. What is important is to build on that history and use whatever additional resources we can to increase our collaborative efforts and remain relevant, particularly in light of the political climate in which we live.

The issue with which we wrestled was how to not diminish NCSDAE’s role in advocacy and provide an even stronger voice. In changing times it was clear that we have “win-win” by collaborating with other organizations that have the same goals, yet greater flexibility for direct lobbying activities. Our conclusion was based on a genuine concern for some member states in regard to their state and/or federal grants where direct lobbying activity is prohibited.

While our classroom instruction focuses on the old school 3Rs of “reading, ‘riting and ‘rithmetic”, we, in leadership, need to strategize our actions using another set of the 3Rs: advocacy that is rellevant, responsible and relational.

In regard to that strategy, please be aware that we:

- Continue to employ Gene Sofer, who has done an excellent job of keeping us up to date on the Washington scene with his policy briefs, as our government relations liaison.
- Held a successful meeting with the heads of a number of Adult Education advocacy groups from across the country to determine strategic ways that we can strengthen our voice by presenting a larger and collective unified front.
- Created a new public awareness and information campaign (“Educate and Elevate”) in partnership with COABE that not only will be used as an awareness campaign for all of our stakeholders but provides tools for anyone interested in Adult Education to voice their concerns effectively
- Met with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos in an unprecedented hour long meeting to familiarize her with an understanding of importance of Adult Education to this country.
- Have no intention of disbanding the SPOC Network... it is a part of who we are as an organization. The plan is for it all communications to our constituents to be managed by the organization’s Executive Director; but is also available as a policy and advocacy communications vehicle for any member to “get out the word” as long as they do it in a spirit of collaboration focused on positive energy.

In times such as these we know this to be true: none of us, as individuals, own the problem or the solution. It will take all of us, using all the resources we have, to make the difference we want to achieve.

Sincerely,

The NAEPDC/NSCDAE Executive Committee;

Beverly Smith (GA), Chair

Reecie Stagnolia (KY), Chair-Elect

Valerie Fischer (ND), Treasurer and Member-at Large

Sheryl Hart (AZ), Chair- Professional Development and Member-at Large

David Walters (AL), Chair-Nominating Committee and Member-at Large

Gail Senese (ME), Member-at Large

Jon Kerr (WA), Member-at-Large

Marcia Hess (WY), Member-at-Large

Patricia Tyler, Executive Director

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[http://naepdc.org/news\\_views\\_clues/nvc\\_home.html](http://naepdc.org/news_views_clues/nvc_home.html)**

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

## NAEPDC

***A Natural Resource For Adult Education State Directors and their Staff Members***

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