

Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) Program Director Council
Minutes
May 15, 2009

Members Present: Judith Branham, Pat Burchell, Jeff Doig, Joan Flanery, Veronica Gayle, Renae Harrison, Susan Jackson, Rodney Johnson, Karen McLeod, Peg Russell, Julie Scoskie and Darlene Urban

Guests: Diana Waddle, Scott County

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Reecie Stagnolia welcomed members. He noted the primary focus of today's meeting was the unveiling of a new professional development (PD) model. He reminded members of KYAE's recent major initiatives—the adult education framework and the performance and accountability model—to revamp the Kentucky's adult education system to help get more adults into the higher education pipeline and ultimately improve the Commonwealth's economy.

With increasing awareness on the need for students to be college and workforce readiness, we know we need to help students prepare for more than the GED® diploma, and it is critical that KYAE provides PD that leads to high-quality instruction. We are beginning to hear more about a managed program approach to delivering adult education instructional services as a way to get a maximum return on investment—the days of having an instructor available in case someone chooses to drop-in for service are becoming things of the past.

As with the framework and the performance and accountability model, KYAE looked at the past and current models, reviewed data, conducted research, and involved both state and local staff in developing the new PD model. It was determined that we need to narrow the scope of PD offerings and provide more intensive training in the critical foundational skill areas of reading, writing and math instruction.

Mr. Stagnolia recognized Joyce Bullock's work in leading efforts to design the new model. While we feel we have a well-thought-out plan, he encouraged members to give feedback. What have we missed? What do we still need to consider? He advised members that KYAE plans to roll out the new PD model at a series of meetings across the state. He asked that members not share the draft plan with others, but rather to give KYAE the opportunity to present the plan, so that everyone hears a consistent message.

Professional Development

Joyce Bullock conveyed thanks to the KYAE Leadership Team for their active participation on an internal PD team and the local adult educator PD focus group for their valuable input in the model. She noted the team has been working since January researching best practices on effective professional development and examining data to identify areas that need attention. The team also worked with the PD contractors on what they could provide to implement the new model.

It was determined we needed to address student learning level gains, the need for more GED completions, the need for higher scores on the GED math and writing sections, employability skills and shrinking family literacy and ESL numbers. In addition, we needed to provide professional development with a focus on low-level learners.

The process focus was three-fold: 1) How should KYAE design PD so that student needs are met? 2) How do we accomplish PD following research identified best practices with existing resources? 3) How do we make offerings more focused so that all instructors have a base knowledge in assessment, instruction and specific content areas?

Considerations/acknowledgments from the current model included: a need to shift the focus from PDUs to equipping instructors with skills to meet student academic needs; PD planning on PDtrack has been difficult; PD offerings are mostly workshops although research shows this is one of the least-effective forms of PD; offering a wide array of workshop sessions taxes KYAE resources; PD scheduling conflicts for part-time instructors and aides (other employment); instructor aides and clerks are taking courses that don't apply to work responsibilities; and all staff have PD requirements regardless of their role.

Research indicates PD is most effective if it is ongoing, targeted and job-embedded, models technology and involves learning communities and program directors.

Based upon KYAE's 2007 needs assessment and feedback from the 2008 KYAE Advisory Committee and PD contractors, it was determined PD objectives should address instructional strategies; differentiated instruction; managed classrooms with syllabi, curriculum, and lesson plans; and have technology and workforce skills embedded.

In the new model, there is no PDU requirement; PD plans in PDtrack will not be required; the definition of full-time staff will be determined by the fiscal agent; and due to declining demand family literacy PD will no longer be offered annually. There will be a classroom aide job classification comprised of aides that do not instruct or serve as tutors/teachers. Training for classroom aides includes the online Orientation to Adult Education course, AERIN training, if involved in data entry, and any other local training that may be determined by the program director.

Since we expect many programs to embrace managed classrooms for instruction, the upcoming PD events will have an emphasis on a managed program approach.

The PD Institute format for full-time staff has a three-month time-frame expectation and includes pre-requisites, an online pre-test, face-to-face kick-off, classroom project, interim Web conferencing or conference calls, coaching visits, either face-to-face or Web conferencing wrap-up session and an online post-test. The Institute and follow-up activities must be completed and the classroom project must be completed with a satisfactory score to receive PD credit.

The 1st Year Instructor Institute will be facilitated by the Adult Education Academy at Morehead State University. It is designed for instructors hired after January 1, 2009. It will provide an introduction to adult education in Kentucky and the KYAE mission, the adult learner, developing lesson plans and syllabi supporting managed ABE/ESL/GED classrooms, using TABE and Official GED Practice Tests results to drive instruction in a managed classroom setting, Bridges to Practice, formal assessment to instruction and effective instructional strategies based on Marzano research.

The 2nd and 3rd Year Instructor Institute will be facilitated by the Adult Education Academy at Morehead State University. It is designed for instructors hired between July 1, 2007 and December 31, 2008. Staff will gain more experience in developing lesson plans and syllabi that support managed ABE/ESL/GED classrooms and gain more experience in using TABE and the GED Official Practice Test results to drive instruction in a managed classroom setting. An optional pre-institute event will be offered in the fall—BEST Plus Implementation Workshop for ESL assessment. An optional post-institute event will be offered in the fall—CASAS Implementation Workshop for ESL assessment.

The Experienced Instructor Institute will be facilitated by the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development. It is designed for instructors hired before July 1, 2007. Objectives are for attendees to be able to develop lesson plans and syllabi to develop and support managed ABE/ESL/GED classrooms using instruction. There are currently four planned tracks: 1) Best Practices in Reading and Writing; 2) Reading Diagnostics and the Struggling Reader; 3) Math instruction; and 4) Bridges and Beyond.

Targeted Institutes are by invitation only and will be facilitated by KYAE. The 2009-10 Targeted Institutes are Leadership Excellence Academy, Year Two, and Power Path Implementation training.

There will be a Program Director Institute facilitated by KYAE held in spring 2010. Program directors will be required to complete the Program Director Institute and one of the Instructor Institutes including the job-embedded project. New program directors will also be required to attend new program director training.

The PD format for part-time instructors/instructional aides will be offered online. Requirements include the online course, Orientation to Adult Education, and two facilitated online courses—Formal Assessment to Instruction (available in 2010) and Effective Instructional Strategies (available in 2010). The National Center for Family Literacy will develop the two required facilitated online courses along with two online electives—Orientation to ESL and Health and Financial Literacy.

Required PD must be completed before participating in electives. PD funds are intended to support the PD model. Once required PD is completed, remaining PD funds may be used to support local PD activities as approved by KYAE. It was noted the PD fund allocations may change in the future to assign a portion of the funding to PD contractors to handle Institute travel expenses.

The Kentucky Center for Mathematics at Northern Kentucky University will be surveying instructors to impact the development of math PD.

In the new model, there will be no partial credit regarding PD requirements.

Questions/Concerns

Since a staff person must complete all items to get credit and courses are offered on a limited basis, members asked KYAE to have a method of dealing with extenuating circumstances. Make-up days could be permitted, if the trainer approves it. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If a staff person doesn't fall into the select category and is interested in attending an Institute that isn't required (experienced instructor wants to attend 2nd and 3rd Year Institute), would it be possible? For the current year, due to budget constraints, the answer is no. We only have enough seats established with the PD contractors to cover required attendees.

When the PD model is rolled out, it was requested that expectations and time commitments be identified. In addition, members requested that a calendar listing dates of face-to-face events be provided, so that program directors and staff can adequately plan personal and local program operation schedules.

Will the PD policy allow for college tuition reimbursement? The current policy provides for tuition reimbursement, and we don't expect that to change.

There was concern expressed that the timing of PD offerings may prevent local staff from attending national conferences as PD activities, since the new model indicates required PD must be completed before doing electives and that PD funds are to first support the PD model and only after required PD is completed may the remaining funds be used for other local PD activities as approved by KYAE. It was acknowledged this may be the case, but KYAE stands by the decision, since conferences are the most expensive acquisition of PD and research indicates short-term workshops are the least-effective forms of PD.

Classroom aides are exempt from attending an Institute. If there are other paid staff who do not provide instructional services and have no interaction with students (work in finance/budget only), could they be exempted? KYAE won't add a "blanket statement" outlining these situations, but will consider requests on a case-by-case basis.

It was requested that KYAE identify a point person with whom local program staff may negotiate policy exemptions.

There was concern expressed that requiring three online courses for part-time employees may be a little time-intensive. If a new part-time instructor is hired mid-way through the contract year, it may be hard for them to complete the requirements, and KYAE was asked to consider reducing the number of required courses depending upon hire date. Until the online courses have been developed, KYAE is unable to determine exact time commitment for part-time staff; however, the three courses will provide new instructors with the minimum base knowledge that is needed to effectively instruct adult learners.

It was requested the policy be written so that if a staff person leaves employment before completing PD requirements, the program director is not held accountable for the non-completion.

Mr. Stagnolia encouraged members to contact KYAE staff if they have other comments.

Other Business

Mr. Stagnolia reported we are beginning to see the positive results from the new framework. KYAE met federal performance goals last year. Since the state Workforce Investment Act (WIA) partner agencies met federal performance goals, Kentucky is eligible to receive nearly \$852,000 in WIA incentive funds. The funds are designated to support systemic improvements that will help the state meet WIA objectives. KYAE is meeting with partner agencies to develop a plan for use of the funds.

B.J. Helton reported that the GED Testing Program regulation change has been approved. The test fee increase will go into effect July 1, 2009.

Wrap-up and Adjourn

Members were asked to sign expense vouchers.

Future Meeting Dates: August 28, 2009 and December 4, 2009