

**Senate Education Committee Hearing  
on Adult Basic Education  
Senator Florence Shapiro  
October 14, 2008**

**Testimony provided by  
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**Recommendations for Adult Literacy funding increase:**

Substantially increasing state funding for Adult literacy during the 2009 legislative session is essential: It will provide our adult recovered-dropout population (who has not attained a high school diploma or its equivalency) with postsecondary educational certification. This certification can be earned simultaneously while acquiring necessary basic literacy skills, preparing adult learners with credentials to enter the Texas workforce for the *most-in-demand* jobs.

With a significant increase of \$50 million over the next biennium, the following points are worthy of consideration:

- Adult Basic Education skills accountability system should adhere to current National Reporting System (NRS) utilizing TABE and BEST standardized testing instruments designed to measure specific educational attainment at all levels of literacy including: reading, writing, math and English language acquisition. This is a nationally-mandated accountability system for Texas' eligibility to receive \$50 million in federal funding each year, under Title II Workforce Investment Act.
- Adult Basic Education (ABE) should be combined with Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL), enabling adult learners to become proficient in English while earning certification for a particular, *in demand* vocation. \*\*
- ABE should be combined with I-BEST (Integrated Basic Skills) program which pairs a basic skills literacy instructor with a professional-technical

instructor in the same classroom at the same time; the adult learner will obtain necessary literacy skills while earning technical certification for the *most-in-demand* jobs. Studies utilizing the I-BEST Model show the highest value-added for work success is literacy combined with an earned one year credential yields a future earning service bump of: 1) \$7,000 more per year for ESL adult learners; and, 2) \$8,500 more per year for ABE/GED adult learners compared to 1) \$2,700 for GED certificates and 2) \$1,700 per year for High School Diplomas. \*\*

\*\* Based upon the Washington State Model, a project funded by the Ford Foundation's *Community Colleges: Bridges to Opportunity*

- ABE providers will use additional funds to target training that addresses the employer needs described by the local workforce board's *demand occupation* list.
- The current Adult Basic Education delivery system will provide literacy education and will work with post-secondary education providers to develop curriculum and to provide instruction toward the goal to:

*Produce literate adults with a 'job-in-demand' certification, enabling each adult the ability of earning a living wage.*

A significant funding increase for Adult Basic Education will provide a positive resolution for Texas' low state literacy and postsecondary attainment rate; by implementing an effective education model as described above, this funding increase will yield a skilled workforce while bolstering the Texas economy.