Transitional College Readiness Programs in Connecticut: Adult Educators as Partners
Connecticut Association for Human Services

CAHS is a statewide policy and program nonprofit working to reduce poverty and build “Family Economic Success”

Policy: focus on early care & education, post-secondary education and job training, tax credits, and adequate state funding for human services

Program: focus on financial capability programs: free tax preparation, access to benefits, financial education and coaching
Today’s Agenda

A. A look at the report:
   ◦ Jim Horan, Executive Director or Roger Senserrich, Policy Director, CAHS

B. Remedial Education in CT
   • Dr. Steve Minkler, Dean of Academic Affairs at Middlesex Community College
   • Dr. Diane Clare-Kearney, Director of Manchester Adult and Continuing Education
   • Fred Silbermann, Program Facilitator for Meriden Adult Education
   • Ren Brockmeyer, Pathways Navigator at Move Up Partnership for Adult Learning
   • Roger Senserrich, CAHS Policy Director*

C. Table discussion: what’s next for Remedial Education in CT?
The report itself:

- PA 12-40 as the catalyst for reform
- 2014 tweaks: opening adult education and community college partnerships for transitional students.
- The 2014 pilots:
  - Initial partnership models
  - Building partnerships – issues and challenges
  - Initial data: encouraging signs
- Policy recommendations
A catalyst for reform: PA 12-40

- Limited conventional remedial education to one semester of English, one semester of math.
- Creates three levels of remedial education:
  - **Embedded level courses**: credit bearing, college level courses with developmental support build in.
    - For students with some remedial needs (12th grade skills) or higher.
    - Proven track record, effective.
  - **Intensive level courses**: one semester long, intensive remedial education classes.
    - Similar to what we had before the reform, students with 10th grade skills.
    - Often more instruction hours and supports than “pre-reform” courses
  - **Transitional level courses:**
    - For students at 8th grade skills or below.
    - Main focus of our report – here is where adult education partnerships are taking place.
Some data: who do we focus on?

Non conventional students: Working parents, below 200% FPL, who are looking at Community College for opportunity

- Often disconnected from education for years - so remedial needs are often complex and specific, needing supports
New partnerships: adult ed in remedial education

- The reform has been tweaked a few times since it passed in 2012, adding fixes and changes.
- For transitional students, most relevant changes last year, allowing the Board of Regents and the CT Department of Education to enter into MOUs to provide transitional college readiness programs – with (some) funding attached.
- Initial RFP from Board of Regents summer 2014
  - Four community colleges were early adopters:
    - Gateway, Housatonic, Manchester, Three Rivers (with New London, Norwich)
  - Four community colleges had modified remediation courses:
    - Asnuntuck, Capital, Naugatuck Valley, Middlesex
  - Four established partnerships in Spring of 2015:
    - Northwestern, Norwalk, Quinebaug Valley, Tunxis
Transitional strategies: models

Common objective: get students ready for embedded level courses

Boot Camps  
(Capital, Naugatuck)
- Math or English (no cost to students)
- 3 – 6 weeks depending on program
- 1 or 2 days/evenings per week
- 3 hours per day
- Tutor support on site
- Includes First Year College Experience course (3 credits)

Semester Long Program  
(Gateway, Housatonic, Manchester, Three Rivers)
- English and Math (no cost to students)
- Covers full semester (12 – 16 weeks) offering math and English remediation
- Meets 3 – 4 days a week
- 1 – 2 hour sessions
- Lab and tutor support on site
- Includes First Year College Experience course (3 credits)
Establishing partnerships

- Common note: short launch window made contacts and coordination a challenge at first.
  - Instructional collaboration – sharing materials in advance was not possible.
  - Recruitment and assessment were defined “as we go”, with limited input from adult education providers on occasion.
  - Access to data and assessments were often incomplete, with adult education providers not having access to test scores.

- Serving transitional students poses additional challenges:
  - Non-academic barriers: students often have unstable lives, and need supports to handle often unpredictable schedules and family needs.
Preliminary Results: “Boot Camps”

- First: very preliminary results, small group.
- High attrition, but also a significant proportion of students moving forward at Capital.
- Northwestern: good completion rate, but lower progression.

Source: Fall 2014 Transitional Strategies Report, Revised March 2, 2015
Preliminary results: Semester-Long Programs

- **Again**: these are small, preliminary numbers.
- Results vary greatly by college: 3R has high non-complete, high embedded; Manchester high complete, no enroll, Housatonic high enroll in credit bearing.
- Adult education partnerships have *slightly better results* (45% students go to credit bearing vs 39%).
Policy recommendations

• Obtain better data:
  • Develop uniform (or comparable) assessment to see student progress – where they come from, how well remediation is working.
  • Track students year over year, to see if they progress towards graduation.

• Develop partnerships:
  • Hire full-time leadership position in charge of transitional programs at each community college / adult ed program.
  • Incorporate ELL students in the system.
  • Provide better coordination, common professional development.

• Address non-academic barriers:
  • Childcare, transportation, flexible schedules, access to services.

• Share best practices.
Conclusions

1. The adult education partnership model shows considerable promise.

2. Building effective partnerships requires work – and a change of mindset. Effective leadership is a must.

3. Connecticut needs these students – and needs to create these new pathways to opportunity.
Questions for the table:

I. Next steps that community colleges and adult education providers can take in your community to improve access to adult education.

II. Who else should be on the table in your community to make transitional programs more effective?

III. What changes should we look into to make the current adult education system more effective, creating pathways to success?