



Joint Newark and Essex County

Literacy Committee/ Workforce Investment Board
JVS, East Orange, NJ
Sept. 19, 2018

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|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Barcelos, Cristhian</i> | LVA, NCC | <i>Moss, Joseph</i> | Newark Works |
| <i>Beckford, Jasmyne</i> | NWDB | <i>Sternstein, Lynn</i> | JVS |
| <i>Butler, Kinea</i> | Newark Works | <i>Schaeffer, Janine</i> | ECWDB |
| <i>Carvajal, Allyson</i> | LWD | <i>Vera, Lissett</i> | FOCUS |
| <i>Chavarria, Ana</i> | FOCUS | <i>Weiss, Howard</i> | ECWDB |
| <i>Langlois, Irene</i> | Maplewood Library | <i>Wright, Tanya</i> | ECC |
| <i>Mirda, Betty</i> | DEDTE-EC | | |

Welcome

Lynn Sternstein opened the meeting with introductions.

Minutes from the May meeting were approved. With a change to spelling of Cristhian's name.

Testing

Lynn stated that there are a few different issues surrounding the testing. One is around the One-Stops, where Newark and Essex already do things differently and it can cause problems. Because some organizations, like JVS that take referrals of clients who have already been TABE tested or CASAS, and do training then have to post test at the end of training.

Howard believes that there will be variety throughout the state. The state has informally indicated that they will be going with CASAS. Howard said Newark is still doing paper tests and July 1st, 2019 is right around the corner. So Lynn stated that everyone will have to change to something. TABE into CASAS is a big investment. Allyson Carvajal stated that they had a meeting last Friday, and one of the discussions was that the CASAS math is not yet approved. Howard said that it is just a matter of time before that will be approved.

Cristhian has compiled a matrix that analyzed the cost of the two tests. He stated that it is complex because there are a lot of literacy providers, besides the One-Stops. There is a concern because TABE is in-line with TASC, which many testing centers in NJ are currently using. CASAS is both cheaper and faster to complete as there is an hour twenty minutes difference in length of test. The state did bring both CASAS and TABE to do presentations on their respective tests.

In the matrix there is a section called "one-time expense" which is basically computers and whatever else is needed to get you up and running. The one obvious item that is not reflected in the matrix is that with TABE, it is basically the same thing that everyone has been doing, so there is minimal training.

His conclusion is that the paper version of TABE is simpler and cheaper. The paper version of CASAS is not even an option because the computer version is so cheap. But the fact that TABE is an hour and twenty minutes longer means that some testing centers will not be able to do it all in one day and it will limit the number of people getting tested. Both CASAS and TABE are web based.

Betty stated that if you already have TABE administrations that you purchased on-line they convert so there is no additional cost.

There was a discussion around trying to make the test shorter. Cristhian stated that math has to be a part of it because most of the students are lacking in math. WIOA only requires you to track on one subject by federal law, but that doesn't mean you stop doing what you're supposed to be doing as an educator. Cristhian stated that if you don't give the locator you are only saving thirty (30) minutes. But Lynn stated that for their clients that is huge. He also stated that he will do all testing in one (1) day.

Allyson asked what the focus of this committee is and Howard responded that everyone is judged on placements. There was a discussion around paper tests vs on-line test.

Cristhian wanted to clarify that if some of the agencies are doing CASAS and some are doing TABE we need to be clear and not comingle the testing. There is an NRS level that they both compare to (1-5). But to enter into the LACES system you will need to pre and post-test in the same test. Lynn also stated that when you put the score in there is no accounting for what level of test was given

There was discussion around space problems and agencies needing to use the computer labs for classrooms.

Jasmyne stated that they were testing people not employment service.

Howard stated that generally we are doing the testing for everyone in our programs. Lynn stated that because she gets referrals from the county she doesn't want to retest she rather just put them into a class. Cristhian stated that the state needs to come up with something so both tests can "live together".

Betty stated that the CASAS scenarios were more work related as compared to TABE. The test materials might not compare.

Howard stated he had a conversation with Hugh Bailey, who needs to decide what Employment Service will be doing. Allyson stated that the locals are doing most of the testing. She said that ES is Wagner Peysner, which provides the initial service in the One-Stops, but they do not do the more regimented assessment for eligibility that the locals do.

Betty stated as far as a decision as to which test to use some of the considerations are that they have a lot of TABE tests already purchased, they do a high volume so length of test is an issue. Cristhian stated that New Jersey is the last state not using TABE 11/12.

Cristhian stated that Passaic County Literacy Consortia is going to have their own training with CASAS coming up. Lynn stated that maybe we should invite the reps from the two tests to our next meeting. Susan Ranga is the contact and phone number is 973-321-0570 on October 12th.

Lynn expressed concern that by the next meeting, many will still be undecided. Jasmyne asked if the agencies need to have a conversation with leadership on both Newark and Essex side. Lynn stated that it would be nice since you are both serving the same population, to do things the same way. She said Orlando Mingo, from Newark, should be at the table. Howard stated that he needs to be made aware that this is a priority because something has to be in place on July 1st, 2019. Lynn stated that she does not get many referrals directly from Newark. Jasmyne stated that she knows it makes sense for Newark and Essex to be aligned and that there needs to be a point person for this and will be taking back the information to Amina.

Howard stated that everyone gets to make their own decision. There seems to be no consensus on which test to use. We will just have to make sure that we know what everyone is doing. He compared it to Beta vs VHS and eventually one will likely win out.

Consortium Update

Lynn stated that as a consortium she believes they made their numbers but as a result of Judy Celestin being out on a leave of absence, they don't know for sure. Cristhian stated that everything is entered into LACES and the state will run a report and grade them but it means nothing.

HSE Update

Betty stated that the only thing to mention is that older people are not coming in to take the test and if they do they do not score to well. Many are working full time and do not have the time to take a class and the test has gotten much harder. Each year they make three (3) new versions of the test. Statistically it is a lower pass rate and doesn't include those that don't complete. The costs of the tests are going up. Eastwick College gives a pre-test and if you don't pass it they won't pay for the student to take the test because they want the people to get into their programs.

NJALL Update

Cristhian stated that for some time now they have been pushing for the state to support programs that complement WIOA. He said ninety-five (95%) percent of the population is below a ninth grade level. The official number is one and a half million people are below high school level; Howard Miller estimated that over four (4) million people in New Jersey are below a high school level, even though they might have a diploma. Cristhian said likely they are even below a six (6) grade level and so WIOA is not meant for this. The state should be creating a track for those people to give them a better shot at finding employment.

Cristhian stated that the library grants have the same requirements as WIOA Title II, which is leading to certifications. This was the one thing that was helping them to do well and now it is the same as WIOA Title II. Allyson stated that Nicholas Toth, who is in charge of the apprenticeship initiative, had a very non-traditional track himself and is very aware of opportunities for those low literacy levels and that is why there is a push for apprenticeships. Howard stated that when they measure our performance if there is no credential we can fail performance. There was talk about the credentials you can get without a high school equivalency and those were CAN, Safeserve and CDL. So basically a person cannot get a credential unless they also have a high school diploma.

Adjournment

There being no further business the Literacy meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.

Respectfully submitted by
Janine Schaeffer

Next Meeting Date: November 19th, 2018, Training Inc.

