

Michigan Adult Education Practitioners Task Forces
Data Task Force Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2008

I. Welcome

Members Present: Gary Tweddle, Angela Steele, Kim Thinnes, Judy Cock, Jill Bestema, Dean Smith, Donna Kapelanski, Robin Dennis, Tania Butkowski, La Vena Paquette, Mary Marcil, Erica Nakfoor, and Sue Muzillo.

Housekeeping: Update current contact information, expense vouchers, and hotels for next time, etc.

II. Minutes: La Vena motioned to approve that Oct. 3, 2008 minutes, Dean supported. Motion carried.

III. Response from Department. No response at this point in time.

IV. Open Issues

A. Definitions: Tania

-Next agenda specifically from the transition document

B. April Conference:

-Tuesday =preconference (2 half day sessions)(Garbage In/Garbage Out/ in morning/ 3 hours)(MAERS data mini sessions/in afternoon/3 hours)

-Wednesday =Adopt a LC (back to back w/ Literacy Task Force's Collaboration break out session)

-Thursday=State Update Report (in the morning)(required)

-Information due to Patti before the end of today (Done w/in meeting)

-Garbage in /Garbage out: Addresses processes, policies, and procedures required for state and federal funding –Tania (Pre-conference = Tuesday/3 hours) (use last year's descriptor, re-registration required)

-Adopt a Literacy Council (request for Wed.)(70 min)(Request back to back w/ collaboration workshop from Literacy Task Force)

-MAEPD website: person in charge of session must register session online, title must reflect topic, online registration due 2/1 (available 1/1 or sooner), contact information must be up to date.

-Gary is in charge of registering Speed Data-ing, Tania is in charge of registering Garbage In/Garbage Out, and Angela is in charge of registering Adopt a Literacy Council.

- Mary Marcil will handle the snapshot and has asked to work w/ a state representative on this project. The state agreed to handle the printing and distribution at the conference. MDLEG will print the snapshot, if data creates it. It should have a note on it w/ permission from state to reproduce and be available via PDF too.

-Double sessions are not allowed at this point in time, but they may be approved if the topic requires it.

- Title: "Speed Data-ing : MAERS, MEGS, Assessments, and Reports!"

- Your opportunity to attend 6, 25 minute sessions on the following topics:

-No pre-registration required, but it is an option

-Six 25 minute mini sessions on MAERS updates (pre-conference Tuesday)(3 hours total)(you might repeat your 28 minutes up to 6 times)(talk for up to 15 minutes/rest is question and answer time/bring some FAQ/feel free to bring handouts/no PowerPoint or overhead necessary)(see descriptions below)

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*Follow Up-Karyn, Garry

- New rules for more than 2 goals, timelines for each goal, especially employment goals, end of the year survey information will be shared. Followed by Q&A.

*Goal Setting-LaDean (tentative), Jill (tentative) (Dean will fill in if they cannot make it)

- How to select appropriate primary and secondary goals to meet student reporting requirements for MAERS. Followed by Q&A.

*Data Entry-Garbage in/Garbage out-Tania

- Addresses processes, policies, and procedures required for state and federal funding. Followed by Q&A.

*Reporting/NRS tables-Bert, John

- Reporting: Where do I find them? What reports do I need? What is on each report? Timeline of when data needs to be entered (quarterly reporting). Followed by Q&A.

*Interpretation/Annual Report-Mary

- What does your MAERS data show about your program? Learn some tips and techniques on how to interpret your successes for your annual report. Followed by Q&A.

*Assessments –LaVena, Angela

- Information on how AE or Literacy programs can effectively use CASAS, TABE, or WorkKeys. The guidelines for each assessment will be covered in addition to frequently asked questions. Followed by Q&A.

*Outcomes-Judy, Erica (tentative)

- Accurate reporting of student outcomes that leads to strong performance in goal and gain attainment. Followed by Q&A.

*Registration/process –Robin Dennis, Donna

- When a student comes in or calls –what next? Tips for an efficient and effective registration process. Followed by Q&A.

*Megs-Sue, Kim (tentative)

- Michigan Electronic Grant System (MEGS) –a brief overview of the application process. Followed by Q&A.

*Dean Smith - floater (helps everyone!) –he is willing to take over Goal Setting if Jill and LaDean cannot make it!

- MAERS Roving Expert: Dean Smith, State MAERS Administrator will rotate from table to table answering the unanswerable questions.

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C. Best Practices

- 2 programs that look best are Hartford and Traverse Bay Area ISD, from standpoint of meeting performance measures. Dean assisted in compliance monitoring committee for Hartford. They have a 100% response rate for follow-up. They go as far as door to door follow-up.
- These are both small programs. Hartford has about 40 students and they send their students to Kalamazoo for testing. It is easier for a smaller program to become a model. Perhaps we need to only focus on mid to large programs.
- Traverse Day Area ISD is large enough to be a model. They have good numbers.
- Orchard View is also a possibility
- We hope to identify at least 5 programs
- We have 15 performance measures, but not all performance measures apply to all programs. We can obtain a % of completion. How well is a program doing?
- Perhaps those 5 agencies could come in and do a presentation on Best Practices presentation at the conference.
- Alarming statistic: If you have a GED program and the majority of your students are functioning at the lowest ABE levels... What do you do? Why are you only offering GED and HSCompletion if you have so many ABE students? Do you really have an ABE program, but it just isn't labeled that way? If you put ABE students in a GED class, it slows down instruction and holds certain students back from efficient attainment. This frustrates students to be in a class that is too difficult for them. This frustration hurts retention. It also creates a circular pattern of seeing the same students year after year that don't make any progress. Part of the problem could be the stigma attached to a class entitled ABE. If you are careful how to title a class, this may help. Some programs, label these classes as Pre-GED instead of ABE. Some students are mandated by courts to obtain a GED. They need to be in a class labeled GED or pre-GED. What about offering 5 levels of math or 5 levels of reading? Label them 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 instead of pre-high school completion, etc. If a student is close to the 9th grade level, that's different. We are talking about those students that are in EFL level 1 and 2. These students should not be in a HSCompletion or GED program yet! There need to be some standards set for required grade level equivalents for eligibility into GED or HSCompletion classes. We need a transition timeline set for all students. If you are in HSCompletion program and you have zero credits –what is the student's goal? This needs to be decided. Data shows these problems: higher drop-out rates, less EFL gains, and less retention. We also need to figure out what programs check in MEGS concerning the programs you offer. Should you be checking ABE if you serve students at that level regardless of the course titles? Programs need to know that students can have 2 dual enrollments for ABE and HSCompletion. You should hold the student in ABE as long as possible –until they are functioning above a 9th grade level in reading, math and language. After they are above a 9th grade reading level in all areas, this is the optimal time to enroll them into HSCompletion or GED. We want to serve their lowest needs first. Realistically, this may not be possible.

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-Dean distributed a report to demonstrate some of these issues. In totals -86.3% of their students are in the lowest levels (EFL 4 and below). This is a problem. Some programs take the initiative to address/teach their ABE students even though they are not coded in this way. Some programs do not even address/teach ABE in any way. The agencies on this list, need to be contacted to code the students as ABE, and their subject of study would be Pre-GED. Another option for the program is dual enrollment as either GED or HSCompletion and ABE. This would help them to accurately reflect the student's goals and instruction. There are 2 separate issues; coding and instruction. Statewide dropout rate is about 30%, but many of these programs are well above 30%. Their students are highly frustrated by the curriculum, and thus are dropping out. The message needs to be, "Do what is best for the student, and not what you think is best for your program!"

-This is not a batching problem, because this is based on assessment scores. The majority of these agencies do not batch.

-Idea: Should the Data Task Force send these agencies a letter recommending that they offer an ABE program? Should Diane be the one sending the letter? Should we suggest/recommend that these agencies assess their students and then offer the programs needed for their students. This becomes very important when there are no alternatives for referral for these students. Before these letters are written, we need to do more fact finding about what they offer program wise and instruction wise. Do we want to address just these programs or all programs? We are dealing w/ programs that have staff turnover, programs that have been isolated from information passed on from the state, their boards are telling them that they should only offer GED/HSC, etc. To determine technical support visits and or monitoring, MDLEG uses similar reports. Many of the programs on MDLEG's technical support list are the same programs.

-Closing Comment: The folks that designed the new Adult Learning System of creating pathways into Post-Secondary Education and Employment. We need to either fix this problem ourselves or we can wait for a mandate to fix it from them which might be painful. As a group, we would like to help these agencies fix it on their own.

D. Marketing Representatives

-Kathleen Sullivan is looking for task force representatives from each task force for the marketing committee

-Mary Marcil and Tania Butkowski will sit on this committee for the Data Task Force

E. Adopt a Literacy Council

-Literacy Task Force representatives met and Data Task Force representatives met to plan back to back in-services for the April conference. The agenda has been set, the list of panel representatives to invite has been created, and Angela Steele will be contacting all parties involved and registering the in-service for the April conference.

F. Assessment Policy

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-Cliff will be submitting this to the federal government. He may have already submitted it and attempted to get feedback for the Task Forces. We will re-visit this once we see the final policy. It will be added to the next agenda, but there is no guarantee that we will have information from the federal government before the next meeting. The biggest issue is that agencies will not meet the 65% required post tests because all of their assessments under a certain number of hours will be invalid.

V. New Business

a. NWLB Grant added to MAERS

-RFP has to be reported into MAERS

-We need to add a funding source to MAERS "No Worker Left Behind." Some students will have multiple funding sources for one enrollment. If we blend funding sources, how can we truly look at the grant's success? We might have to end up dual entering students.

-What if a person has a High School Diploma and they are over 18 years of age or a college degree and goes back for a remedial class? Where is this checked? Be careful w/ funding. 107 can cover some instruction and NWLB can cover other instruction.

-These decisions might have to be made after we identify who is awarded the funding.

-Most programs are going for the half million instead of the lower amounts, so their might only be 5 awards.

-Either one program would enter data for all partnerships or it is a consortium and each program enters their own data and it is then compiled together. In a perfect world, the provider puts the information in. The fiscal agent runs reports for the entire partnership, but also for each provider.

-The only answer that we can see at this point in time is a totally separate enrollment for each NWLB student.

-The selection process will happen at MDLEG before the holidays, but agencies will not be informed until January. Implementation begins in February.

-What measures are the powers that be going to want to look at to judge the effectiveness of their program? There are 2 components to the measurement –locally to you and structurally (how you measure it compared to what was previously done).

b. How Michigan NRS compares to other states

-Reports distributed on MI, IL, IN, OH, TX, and WI for 2006-2007 by Dean Smith

-The other states all use social security number data matching instead of surveys for economic goals. At this point in time, Michigan cannot, by law, use social security numbers for data matching.

-All states are using TABE or CASAS. All states place people into EFLs the same way.

-MDLEG negotiates state's negotiated gains with the federal government.

-With ESL we are above par compared to other states. With ABE we are below par compared to other states.

-AGAIN, the problem IS that programs are putting people in GED or HS Completion when they should be coded as ABE.

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-We than examined 2007-2008 Michigan data and discussed progress from the last program year.

c. Adult Learner Update

-No update as this point in time

VI. Recommendations for Department

-Gary will re-email Diane a reminder including recommendations from the past

VII. Agenda Items for Next Meeting: 1/30/09 at Midland

-New Definitions/Transition

-Coding/Instruction Problems for ABE vs. HS Completion and GED (Goal for this meeting = finalize communication w/ certain agencies and plan for communication/wording in place/people in charge of the communication identified)

-April Conference

-Assessment Policy (# of hours)

-NWLB Grant and data entry into MAERS (tracking)

-Snapshot

Submitted: Angela Steele

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