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## Literacy Assistance Center

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## The LAC Is Moving!

We're moving to a beautiful new program-friendly space right across the street. Updated technology and new training spaces will help us fulfill our mission of service to the New York literacy community.

Our moving date is Saturday, June 12. If you're attending a professional development event or visiting for any reason during the weeks of June 7 or 14, please visit our website for up-to-date information on the status of our move.

**Our new address will be:**  
Literacy Assistance Center  
39 Broadway, Floor 12  
New York, NY 10004

We'll be taking our phone and fax numbers with us, and of course you can always reach us by email or on the web at [www.lacnyc.org](http://www.lacnyc.org). Staying in lower Manhattan means that we're still easily accessible by public transportation from all five boroughs.

# LITERACY UPDATE



MAY 2010 Vol.19 No.4

Literacy Assistance Center

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## Creating a Homegrown Workforce for NYC

> Speaker Christine C. Quinn *New York City Council*

In the midst of the worst recession our country has faced in decades, the City Council has been looking for new ways to fight unemployment here in New York City. So in February of this year, I outlined a plan to build a stronger local economy and get more New Yorkers back into the workforce.

A key part of that plan is to make sure those New Yorkers have the necessary skills to compete for quality jobs.

Right now, approximately 1.6 million New York City residents are out of school and don't have a high school diploma. Individuals without a high school diploma are much more likely to be unemployed, and those lucky enough to find a job will make significantly less, than someone with a diploma or higher degree.

Meanwhile, some employers are directing their staff to learn English or get a high school diploma in order to retain their jobs. These are the New Yorkers we are trying to help—but many of them simply don't know how to access services.

The GED is a critical first step to college, career advancement, and high-skill jobs. The goal of the City Council is to help more New Yorkers get their GED so they can obtain a good job and support their families.

Unfortunately, the adult literacy and GED systems in New York City are fragmented. Many potential test-takers complain about lack of access to the limited number of GED preparation programs. They say they have to wait up to six months to get a test date.

And because people register at multiple sites, they find empty seats when tests are given.

That's why we partnered with the Literacy Assistance Center, the NYC Department of Education, and the New York Community Trust to create the GED Compass. When this new website is launched this summer, it will centralize registration, ensuring that multiple seats are not held by one person. It will answer frequently asked questions on how to prepare for the GED and connect users with a literacy or GED prep program that suits their needs.

*continued on page 9*

# A Volatile Year

> Elyse Barbell *Executive Director*

I must have blinked sometime in early November. Suddenly it's 88 degrees out, and we are looking at the close of FY 2010. This spring has felt like one lo-o-ong Thursday with the weekend (summer) just around the corner.

It has been a strange up-and-down kind of year. On the plus side, we're seeing unprecedented support for adult literacy education at all levels of government. On the federal level, no one could better lead the long-awaited reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act than Brenda Dann-Messier, Assistant Secretary for the Office Adult and Vocational Education. She has led a number of federal initiatives in which the LAC and other leaders have participated, including the Leadership Excellence Academy, the Star Reading Program, the Confinte international literacy conference, and now the Great Cities initiative (see page 11).

The NYS Education Department (SED) has been incredibly active as well. Literacy Zones are changing the shape and texture of adult education. SED has provided great leadership in bringing the state Department of Labor to the table as a collaborator (see page 9). SED's adult education team is about to merge with several other initiatives, including vocational rehabilitation and GED, under the direction of a new deputy commissioner of adult education.

At the city level, Christine Quinn has become a great fan of the adult education system. She helped to fund the GED testing initiative and is supporting efforts to better align workforce development with basic skill education citywide. Speaker Quinn "gets" why people who want a GED should take the Official Practice Test and enroll in a prep program rather than going into the test "cold."

On the minus side, this tremendous support translates into future, not present, gains. I would characterize 2010 as the Year of the Incredible Shrinking Budget. Cuts in funding at both the state and city levels have been devastating. Just when we need them most, private and foundation contributions are also falling.

All this even as almost 15 percent of New Yorkers without a high school diploma are unemployed, and we still have millions in need of basic education and ESOL services.

How can we continue to function? How do we go on meeting unrealistic expectations under difficult circumstances when we have no money and no job security, our staffs are demoralized, and we're all simply exhausted? When does this get easier?

All the government support means it probably will get easier eventually. In the meantime, we remember that, if this year has been hard for us, it has been triply hard for our students. We persevere and continue to do the best we can with what we have because our students are worth it. We fight the good fight on their behalf.

Happy summer. Hope to see you soon at our new space at 39 Broadway! ●



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Managing editor Jan Gallagher

Copyeditor JoAnne Steglitz

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# Sandwiches and ESOL

*After his well-received presentation at the literacy and workforce development summit on March 25, Jeffrey Zurofsky spoke with Literacy Update about the efforts of his company, 'wichcraft, to provide English language training for its workers.*

*Update:* So, what is the founder of a chain of gourmet sandwich restaurants doing at a summit on literacy and the workforce?

*Zurofsky:* We have a small-business grant from Small Business Services of NYC to execute training for our staff. Of course we have skills training, food handling skills, career certifications—job-related skills—but we also have literacy training, mostly ESOL for our non-English-speaking employees. Learning English is what will enable people to break through from an hourly wage job in the kitchen to being a manager on the floor.

Literacy in the workforce is really important to us, and we're having a lot of success with this program. We're doing really well with employees who might even have trouble getting in somewhere else. They start out with us and, because of the language training, they do well and can move forward.

*Update:* You run these programs on site?

*Zurofsky:* No, we send people to one of the city's approved vendors for ESOL training. I'd like to find a way to bring it on site, though. It would be great if an employee could just leave work, go to class, and come back.

*Update:* What's in it for 'wichcraft? What are the business advantages?

*Zurofsky:* First and foremost, the SBS program is a major incentive. They've done a great job to give us a lot of focus and incentive to complete the program.

But we've always understood that literacy issues, and especially not knowing English, is something that could hold our people back. We've never thought that our staff was unable to do better. They can be very well trained in the technical aspects of the job, but they're held back by their lack of English skills.

So a big advantage is that we get a great set of employees who are loyal to us. For example, the majority of our cooks are Spanish-speaking. They are the group with the greatest longevity with us. We give them the chance to learn English, and now we have a large number of people ready for management jobs who are already trained in the business and know the company culture. They're extremely grateful for the opportunity—and they're not going anywhere.

Then, too, we get things like this opportunity to talk to *Literacy Update*. It's a great way to build public awareness. Not enough people are doing enough about this issue.

*Update:* What would you like to say to readers of *Literacy Update*?

*Zurofsky:* You know, this is important. I got a little flack at the summit because our ESL provider is [a for-profit company]. But we chose them because we knew about them, and our employees knew about them and recommended them.

If possible, the folks like the ones at the summit who run the free or low-fee programs should be doing more marketing. They should be reaching out to potential students like the workers in our restaurants and to businesses like mine. All those great programs need to create some buzz about what they're doing.

I'm sure it's hard for people in nonprofit and social services to think like a business, but a small tweak can make a big difference. You bring more attention, and that can increase your funding, your sponsorships and partnerships. You have to keep marketing your successes. ●

# Training for the Trades

## Contextual Literacy & Math Education

> **Marilyn J. Rymniak** *Director, Curriculum Development Services, LAC & Marta Nelson* *Director of Policy and Planning, Center for Employment Opportunities*

The skilled building trades—such as plumbing, electricity, and refrigeration mechanics—are among the few sectors that have traditionally been open to people with criminal convictions. The work is rewarding and offers good pay, so many ex-offenders working entry-level jobs are eager to break in.

Unfortunately, training to work in the trades requires high-school-level math skills, time and support to do the training, and money to pay for it—all of which most people coming home from prison do not have.

### Ticket into the Labor Force

In response to this dilemma, the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) created the CEO Academy to help people break into the skilled trades. The CEO Academy gives participants the academic preparation they need and the guidance and support they want, plus actual training in a trade—all free of charge.

The trades can offer hardworking persons a ticket into the mainstream labor force, says Mindy Tarlow, CEO's executive director. The CEO Academy, made possible by a substantial gift from venture capitalist and philanthropist Frank Sica, along with the Tiger Foundation, the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), and the New York State Department of Labor, provides academic preparation to help participants enroll in and complete skilled trades courses at Bronx Community College or New York City Technical College.

To assist CEO in this effort, the LAC developed preparatory or “bridge” curriculum and training programs combining language literacy and numeracy instruction presented in the context of the plumbing, electrical, and refrigeration trades.

### Curriculum in Context

The LAC's approach to developing contextualized curriculum is rooted in evidence-based practice and models. In particular, we rely on the seminal work of Tom Sticht (1997) and the *Equipped for the Future* model from the National Institute for Literacy (Stein, 2000).

According to Sticht, the functional context approach stresses relevance to learners' experience and work context. Learning new information is easier when learners can relate the new knowledge to knowledge they already possess.

The functional context model emphasizes the interaction of the learner's knowledge base; processing skills including language, problem-solving, and learning strategies; and information displays.

In developing the CEO Academy curricula, we followed these research-based principles:

- > Instruction should draw on learners' prior knowledge.
- > Instruction should use material and equipment that learners will actually use after training.
- > Valid assessment must be specific to the context and content of the learning.

In a contextualized curriculum, we start with real-life contexts and weave these contexts into every stage of the teaching and learning process. The focus is on the application, rather than the possession, of knowledge.

The concept is proving its validity. Several cohorts of students have completed the literacy and numeracy curricula, and participants have successfully taken subsequent courses in the certification programs at Bronx Community College and City Tech. The CEO Academy curricula are giving these students the basic skills they need to be successful in training for meaningful work that pays a living wage. ●

### Works Cited

Stein, S. G. (2000). *Equipped for the Future content standards*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Sticht, T. G. (1997). The theory behind content-based instruction. *Focus on Basics*, 1(D), 6–10.

## CONTEXTUAL CURRICULUM SAMPLE

Providing contextual curriculum means doing good math or literacy instruction using the language of the target profession.

### Math + Plumbing

1. You have ordered a total of 145 boxes of PVC pipe. Each box contains 12 lengths of pipe. In total, your order contains \_\_\_\_\_ lengths of pipe.
2. You have a pipe that measures 40 inches in length. For an installation, you need several short sections of pipe that are each 6.5 inches long. By cutting a 40-inch pipe, you will end up with a total of \_\_\_\_\_ whole 6.5-inch sections.

# Collaboration: The Success Factor

> Ellen Richer *Director, NYSED RAEN of NYC*

Today's political climate and economic volatility underscore a theme that has been gaining in intensity for some time. In March, the Literacy Assistance Center hosted a Literacy/Workforce conference, co-sponsored by the NY State Education Department, NYC Small Business Services, the Mayor's Office of Adult Education, and the NY State Department of Labor. The conference's primary goal was to initiate dialogue between Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I and Title II programs to improve literacy and job-readiness skills in New York's workforce. The unspoken agenda was to nurture collaboration between literacy and workforce systems to create new, more efficient funding formulae to make up for drastic city and state funding cuts.

## A Prediction of Things to Come

That March 25 conference was prescient. The cuts announced less than two months later demanded that we look at funding in a radically different way. As the field gathered to triage state cuts to already-stretched GED budgets, a second blow from the mayor's office shook us at our foundation.

How we self-assess and how we listen will determine how well we survive this turbulent period. Over the last several months, seminars and conferences have demonstrated a growing awareness of the benefits of collaboration between systems, particularly between Title I and Title II silos. For example, NYC Employment and Training Coalition conferences focused on sector development and the engineering of new career pathways in which individuals can get jobs and then advance by meeting increasingly rigorous academic benchmarks integrated with increasingly technical work experience.

These presentations suggest that we think about the natural next steps: contextualized curricula and nationally piloted models such as Washington State's I-Best and Virginia's PlugGED In. The LAC is working with unions and other stakeholders to develop contextualized curricula (see page 4) and training modules for project managers from both literacy and workforce centers in order to smooth the pathway for individuals navigating between the two systems.

## Collaboration of Resources: Human and Fiscal

Community colleges will be at the heart of many collaborations between literacy and workforce development. At JobsFirst's April conference, representatives from Hostos Community

College described their work with community-based organizations to bridge the readiness gap experienced by many who have attained their GED and are transitioning into college or employment.

This emphasis on community colleges as a leading resource can be heard in announcements from the Obama administration and in presentations by Assistant Secretary of Education Brenda Dann-Messier, who spoke at the New York Association for Community / Continuing Education (NYACCE) conference in May. She stressed the need to think creatively about realigning resources and strengths of different providers and about developing a portfolio of blended funding streams. These actions would improve both student outcomes and program fiscal capacity.

The NYACCE conference provided a forum for the NY State Education Department (NYSED), led by Bob Purga, to speak of challenges and opportunities at the state level. He presented a similar message of the need for collaborations. The announcement of a new request for proposals in September to create nine additional Literacy Zones reiterated this theme. This infusion of literacy dollars, coming at this critical time, underscores NYSED's enthusiasm for and commitment to this comprehensive service model.

## It's All Developmental

John Twomey of the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP) presented a state-of-the-nation report that put into developmental context our interwoven financial and human capital crises. Over the last 45 years, the explosion in technology eliminated classes of jobs once available to those without a high school diploma and created jobs demanding higher technical, mathematical, and problem-solving skills. Distracted by shorter-term social and economic consequences, we failed to envision the logical next steps needed to educate and train a new workforce. Fifty years after Sputnik energized our nation to dominate in educational achievement, we find that we have languished while the developing world took the lead.

But facing challenges is part of our culture. Our competitive spirit needs a challenge to spark commitment. We are now fueling for the next hurdle. Despite drastic financial conditions, motivation to find new ways to prevail will continue. Passion is, as always, the foundation of all our efforts. ●

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS >>

### June 1

#### GED Study Skills

Tuesday, June 1, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

**Audience:** GED teachers

**Facilitator:** Barbara Sparks, LAC

Help your students succeed by showing them not just what to study but how to study. Come away with curriculum materials, online resources, and strategies for integrating study skills into your content-based teaching.

### June 2

#### STAR Reading

Wednesday, June 2, 10 am–3 pm

**Audience:** ABE teachers

**Facilitator:** Ellen Richer, NYSED RAEN of NYC

The STAR Reading project was created by the U.S. Department of Education to help programs make systemic and instructional changes to improve reading achievement of intermediate-level adult learners.

### June 3

#### BEST Plus Test Refresher

Thursday, June 3, 9:30 am–2:00 pm

**Audience:** Previously certified BEST Plus administrators

**Facilitator:** Be Jensen, LAC

Need to keep your BEST Plus certification current? This refresher is for you.

### June 7

#### ASISTS Data Entry

Monday, June 7, 9:30 am–4:30 pm

**Audience:** New data entry staff or other staff who use ASISTS daily

**Facilitators:** Nell Eckersley, Kate Tornese, LAC

This training introduces new users to the Adult Student Information System and Technical Support (ASISTS) web-based data system.

### June 17

#### Generating ASISTS Reports

Thursday, June 17, 9:30 am–1:30 pm

**Audience:** Data managers, program managers, other data staff

**Facilitators:** Nell Eckersley, Kate Tornese, LAC

This training gives data managers and other staff the tools to manage their NRS data throughout the year.

### June 25

#### Adult Literacy Educator Core Curriculum (ALECC)

Indicators of Program Quality

Friday, June 25, 9:00 am–12:30 pm

**Audience:** New adult literacy, ESOL, and GED teachers

**Facilitator:** Be Jensen

Learn about program assessment instruments that have been benchmarked with the NY State Education Department's Indicators of Program Quality; develop your own professional development plan for the coming year.

### July 2

#### ASISTS Data Roundtable

Friday, July 2, 2:00–4:00 pm

**Audience:** Program managers, ASISTS data managers

**Facilitator:** Nell Eckersley

Ask questions and share data experiences with other members of the adult literacy community. Registration required.

### July 9–23

#### Teaching English as a Second Language to Adults (TESLA) Certificate Program Summer Intensive

NOTE NEW DATES!

Previously registered participants only.

### July 12

#### ASISTS Data Entry

Monday, July 12, 9:30 am–4:30 pm

See June 7 for details

Fuller descriptions are available at [www.lacnyc.org](http://www.lacnyc.org).

Building management requires that all visitors have picture ID and sign in. Please leave extra time for this procedure.

**RSVP: [RSVP@LACNYC.ORG](mailto:RSVP@LACNYC.ORG) OR LAC RESERVATION LINE AT 212.803.3323**

## July 14

### **NYSED Regional Adult Education Network of NYC**

Wednesday, July 14, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

**Audience:** Staff of agencies receiving federal or state funds to provide adult literacy services  
**Facilitator:** Ellen Richer, NYSED RAEN of NYC

The NY State Education Department regularly gathers program leaders to discuss RAEN initiatives and concerns.

## July 21

### **BEST Plus Test Administrator Training**

Wednesday, July 21, 9:30 am–3:30 pm

**Audience:** Test administrators, teachers, administrators, intake staff  
**Facilitator:** Be Jensen

Become a certified BEST Plus Test Administrator. Participants receive a test administrator guide and practice CD.

## July 28

### **TABE Test Administrator Training**

Wednesday, July 28, 9:30 am–3:30 pm

**Audience:** Test administrators, program staff  
**Facilitator:** Be Jensen, LAC

Learn about the test state-funded programs use to place students in adult basic education classes and to measure educational gain: Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Forms 7, 8, 9, and 10.

## Aug. 6

### **ASISTS Data Roundtable**

Friday, August 6, 2:00–4:00 pm  
See July 2 for description.

## Aug. 9–20

### **ALECC Two-Week Summer Intensive**

NOTE NEW DATES!

**Audience:** New adult literacy, ESOL, and GED teachers

The Adult Literacy Educator Core Curriculum (ALECC) certificate program covers the foundations of adult teaching and learning in a blended format of face-to-face sessions supported by online discussions and assignments.

Applications due July 15. For information, contact Marilyn Rymniak at [MarilynR@lacnyc.org](mailto:MarilynR@lacnyc.org) or 212.803.3322.

## Aug. 17

### **ASISTS Data Entry**

Tuesday, August 17, 9:30 am–4:30 pm  
See June 7 for description.

## Aug. 18

### **BEST Plus Test Administrator Training**

Wednesday, August 18, 9:30 am–3:30 pm  
See July 21 for description.

## Aug. 25

### **TABE Test Administrator Training**

Wednesday, August 25, 9:30 am–3:30 pm  
See July 28 for description.

**All events take place at the LAC.**

**\* We are located at 32 Broadway until June 12 and at 39 Broadway thereafter—but please check our website for the location of events in June! See page 12 for details.**

# Converge, Not Collide

## Basic Skills and Employment Services in NYC

> **David Jason Fischer** *Vice President for Planning and Policy, Workforce Investment Board*

The history of efforts to align basic education and employment services in New York City has been marked by mistrust, misunderstandings, and missed opportunities.

From the outside, this divide doesn't make much sense. We know that the most common goal for individuals who seek literacy and basic education services is a job. Meanwhile, those looking for work who lack the foundational skills and workplace competencies that employers demand will never enjoy the job security or earning power of their higher skilled counterparts—if they're fortunate enough to find work at all. That the systems struggle to co-exist seems to confirm every stereotype of government as myopic, impenetrable, and process-focused rather than service-oriented.

### **Estranged Siblings?**

If these two areas, both funded under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), are comparable to estranged siblings with divergent philosophies and goals, it's past time to seek reconciliation. Happily, efforts are now underway in New York City to do just that, including several initiatives championed by the Speaker of the City Council and an unprecedented collaboration between a number of state and city agencies, including the New York City Workforce Investment Board (WIB), to identify and address specific frictions.

It helps to understand the problem before we can solve it. Absurd as the divide between employment services and basic education might seem to customers and observers, for those within the system, the differences are real and significant. Most fundamental is the question of who is really being served: employers, who we hope will hire those who receive WIA-funded services, or the customers themselves.

### **Or Partners toward a Common Goal?**

What's not in question is just how much need there is for dramatic improvement of New Yorkers' basic skills or how devastating are the labor market consequences of low educational attainment. As of September 2009, the unemployment rate in the U.S. for individuals with less than a high school degree or GED was nearly three times that of college graduates. The difference in median lifetime earnings is even more pronounced: about \$627,000 for non-high school grads, compared to over \$2.5 million for college graduates.

As both an educational milestone and a meaningful credential to potential employers, the GED is a good place to start the search for closer alignment. New York City's abysmal GED pass rate adds urgency: Only 48 percent of city residents who took the test passed in 2007, compared to a national rate of 72 percent.

The WIB is working with City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and other stakeholders to improve GED outcomes. We plan to develop an online centralized database with information on registering for the test, how to prepare for the exam, and where to find test prep programs. We're also partnering with the NYC Departments of Small Business Services and Education to better serve New Yorkers who come through Workforce 1 Career Centers. A pilot program set to launch later this year at two centers will connect customers without a high school credential—27,000 of whom sought services across the system in 2009—to GED preparation and testing.

At the same time, a coalition of state and city partners is exploring possibilities for more comprehensive integration. We took a strong first step on March 25, when the WIB joined the New York State Education Department and Department of Labor and the Mayor's Office of Adult Education to co-sponsor "Building Skills for Better Jobs," an all-day forum on bridging the divide. The event included three panels—one of employers and business intermediaries, one of policymakers, and one of NYC service providers—each conveying the message that these two systems are as closely intertwined as the skill attainment and labor market success they hope to promote.

We know this alignment is possible, because it's already being done. Providers as varied as the Queens Public Library, Highbridge Community Life Center, and Turning Point in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn—all represented on the final panel of the March 25 event—are bridging the gap on a daily basis. As city and state agencies, we can take inspiration from their example and try to capture the lessons of their success. In a time of great need and limited resources, we can't afford to continue this family feud. ●

## Creating a Homegrown Workforce for NYC *continued*

We've also realized that New York City is not doing everything possible to reach people who may need services but don't know how to access them. We have a captive and motivated audience in the 27,000 people who last year came into our Workforce 1 job placement centers but didn't have a high school diploma. We've been missing a major opportunity to systematically connect these individuals to literacy preparation programs or the GED test. So this summer, working with the New York City's Department of Education and the Department of Small Business Services, we're starting a pilot program that will make sure that people entering a Workforce 1 center without a high school diploma get on a path to taking the GED.

The budget situation, for both the city and the state, is daunting. The adult literacy and GED testing systems, which have been grossly underfunded, are facing even more cuts. NY State is looking to cut \$1.1 million from GED testing and has over the years decreased Adult Literacy Education funding to the tune of \$2.6 million. These cuts, if implemented, will have a devastating impact on adult literacy education and GED testing services in New York City. We remain hopeful that funding to these programs will be restored.



On the eve of the March 25 summit, Speaker Quinn met with the LAC board of directors to discuss her commitment to adult literacy and GED programming.

The City Council is optimistic about the work ahead—but we continue to look for more ideas and for other ways to improve and better align the adult literacy and the workforce development services in the five boroughs. It's the responsibility of city government not just to create jobs, but to connect people to the jobs we create and help people retain the jobs they have. For one in four working-age New Yorkers, a GED is the first and most intimidating obstacle to a good job. We need to do everything in our power to help them pass it. ●

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## Aligning WIA Title I and II NYS Labor and Education Departments Collaborate

> **Bruce Herman** *Deputy Commissioner, Workforce Development, NYS Department of Labor & Robert Purga* *NYS Education Department*

As leaders of New York's workforce development efforts, the State Department of Labor and the State Education Department are working closely to address the ever-changing needs of today's workers and businesses. Over the past two years, the needs of business and industry have changed drastically. New York State has lost 263,500 private-sector jobs since we went into recession in August 2008. These job losses have cut across a wide variety of industries, including manufacturing and professional and business services. With the collapse of New York City's financial sector, the financial and insurance industries lost 39,100 jobs since August 2007; securities employment is down 30,000 over the same period, and projected losses through 2012 double these numbers.

Yet the outlook is anything but bleak. Economists indicate that a gradual upturn is taking place. Businesses are also anticipating a brighter outlook. As they take a hard look at their future workforce needs, employers are re-envisioning the

skills and talents required for new product development; they're also integrating new technologies and techniques that will gain them a competitive advantage. This is a prime opportunity for state and local policymakers to strengthen New York's economy by ensuring that our workforce is prepared.

### Meeting the Labor Challenge

Tomorrow's jobs will not look like the jobs of today. But one thing is certain: Further education and training will be essential. Anthony Carnevale of the Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce emphasized before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions that 64 percent of new job openings will require some postsecondary education. Skill credentials and new industry certifications will be important assets for workers competing for jobs, especially in the emerging clean energy and "green" sectors.

*continued on page 10*

## Aligning WIA Title I and II *continued*

The Department of Labor (DOL) is moving to address these changes. It recently awarded approximately \$5 million in WIA-ARRA (economic stimulus) funding for Disconnected Youth Grants to organizations statewide. Programs awarded these grants will provide services including career planning, work readiness training, high school diploma or GED preparation, and basic occupational skills training.

DOL also awarded approximately \$15 million through the Emerging and Transitional Worker Program. Awards were made to 44 organizations to provide over 6,200 low-income, unemployed adults and older youth with skills and competencies to successfully obtain employment and advance their careers. Three-quarters of the programs target construction and have a green component.

The State Education Department (SED), for its part, is committing \$4 million to fund career and postsecondary pathway models beginning in January. This funding supplements efforts underway in each region of the state to develop pathway models.

### **An Educated Workforce**

Collaboration is also required to increase the competitive advantage of the many New Yorkers who do not have the reading, math, or English language skills to be self-sufficient or to participate in their children's education. Eighty-eight million adults currently in the workforce have low literacy, limited English proficiency, or no educational credential past high school.

To meet the needs of these undereducated workers in the new economy, SED will bring together four key offices that work with out-of-school youth and adults: adult education, GED testing, vocational rehabilitation minus special education, and proprietary schools. Under one deputy commissioner, this new office will provide unprecedented focus and coordination.

We are also capitalizing on one of our greatest strengths: technology innovation. Assets being tapped or piloted include ASISTS, SED's web-based reporting system; DOL's One Stop Operating System, Career Zone, and Job Zone; Learner Web, an innovative virtual learning pathways plan in Central New York; mybenefitsny.gov, an online benefits portal from the NY Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance; IBM's Lotus Live, which is creating a learning community across 18 Literacy Zones; and the Literacy Assistance Center's virtual GED referral system.

The Literacy Zones themselves are an example of collaboration designed to provide comprehensive services and pathways out of poverty in communities with concentrated poverty or limited English language proficiency. Initial impact data is impressive, showing what is possible when

all systems align to support adult career pathways. SED anticipates funding an additional 17 Literacy Zones.

DOL and SED are using WIA incentive funds to incorporate the use of the National Work Readiness Credential into the Literacy Zones. This certification is the first national standards-based assessment for entry-level workers to provide a universal, transferable standard for work readiness—as defined by employers. This credential, earned after rigorous testing, can often give entry-level job candidates a competitive advantage.

The Board of Regents has made GED preparation and testing a priority. Short term, the Regents have called for \$2 million in state funding for GED testing to continue to reimburse GED test centers, provide Official Practice Test screening to ensure readiness for the GED, and support GED Compass, the virtual referral center. The Regents made the hard decision to cut \$1.1 million to reimburse test centers for testing while targeting \$2.4 million to keep the minimum going: over \$1 million to the American Council on Education to provide the GED and over \$1 million to cover the costs of site fees, materials, examiner training, test-taker fees, and test scoring. More work will be required when the fifth edition of the GED exam rolls out in 2014 or 2015. It will be newly aligned with common core standards for high school graduation—think trigonometry instead of algebra.

### **Making It Happen—Together**

President Obama's 2011 budget proposes a Workforce Innovation Partnership between the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education to support and test promising approaches to job training and to encourage states and localities to collaborate on improving services. This partnership at the federal level will facilitate our ability to align workforce and education initiatives at the state level.

DOL supports an increased emphasis on career development and career planning in elementary and secondary school and has been teaching educators to use career planning to better engage students, particularly those at risk of dropping out. This past summer, DOL and SED partnered to recruit educators from alternative high schools to participate in our Educator Academies. We're also working together to disseminate what works. With the State University of New York and the City University of New York, we are sponsoring statewide summits on postsecondary transition this fall and on workforce transition next spring.

Our charge is clear: We must work together and align our goals and resources to create an agile system that can quickly respond to the skill and talent needs of a newly emerging economy. We must be thoughtful about our approach, quick to implement our strategies, and resolute in fostering the partnerships that will bring success. ●

## Literacy Recognition Awards

Join us in celebrating the achievements of the New York City literacy community on Wednesday, June 30, at the 25th annual Literacy Recognition Award Ceremony, to be held at Scholastic, Inc., 557 Broadway.



The LAC is proud and humbled to present the first ever Lifetime Achievement Literacy Recognition Award to Marian Lapsley (Schwartz) Cross. Marian founded the New York City Adult Literacy Initiative and the Literacy Assistance Center during her decade-long tenure with the New York City Mayor's Office, where she was Special Assistant for Education.

She subsequently founded the Adult Literacy Media Alliance, home of TV411 for adults who want to improve their literacy skills. She has worked as a secondary school teacher in Nigeria and in East Harlem. She holds a B.A. in English Literature, an M.A. in Teaching, and a Ph.D. in Anthropology and Linguistics.

Marian has been a tireless advocate for the city's adult learners for over 30 years. She still serves as a guiding light and grounding force for the LAC board of directors, where she keeps everyone focused on our mission to support and promote highly effective literacy services for adults and youths. This award is a small token of the enormous respect Marian commands in the NYC literacy community.

We also congratulate these recipients of 2010 Literacy Recognition Awards:

### Career Achievement Award

#### Leslee Oppenheim

*Director of Language & Literacy Programs*  
CUNY Office of Academic Affairs

#### Wayne Carey

*Counselor*  
Borough of Manhattan  
Community College  
Adult Basic Education

#### Caryn T. Davis

*Instructor*  
College of Staten Island  
CUNY Language Immersion Program  
(CLIP)

#### Hillary Gardner

*Professional Development Coordinator*  
CUNY Adult Literacy Program

#### Bi Ming Long

*Volunteer Assistant Teacher*  
University Settlement Society  
Family Literacy Program

#### Robert Stein

*Staff Developer/Computer Lab  
Lead Teacher*  
BEGIN Language Work Study Program

#### Nestor Tebio

*Program Manager*  
Catholic Charities of Brooklyn & Queens  
ESOL Program

## New Dates for Summer Intensives

Our summer intensive programs will be taking place a little later in the summer because of our move. Registered participants have already been notified—but there's still time to register for the ALECC Certificate Program!

- > Teaching English as a Second Language to Adults (TESLA) Certificate Program: NEW DATES: July 9–23. Sorry, registration closed in May.
- > Adult Literacy Educator Core Curriculum (ALECC) Certificate Program. NEW DATES: August 9–20. Apply by July 15! Contact Marilyn Rymniak, MarilynR@lacnyc.org or 212.803.3322.

## The LAC is moving!

See page 12.

## NYC in the Great Cities Summit

New York City has been selected as one of the five cities to participate in the Great Cities Summit, a multi-year initiative of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The other four cities are Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, and Houston.

According to the NIFL announcement ([www.nifl.gov/news/GreatCities2010](http://www.nifl.gov/news/GreatCities2010)), “the Summit will convene leading educators who will assess their city's adult education needs, create action plans to address them, learn about available federal resources to support implementation of these plans, form supportive partnerships, and establish a network for collaborative peer learning.”

Lead applicants for the Great Cities Summit City were the NYC Department of Education Office of Adult and Continuing Education and the Literacy Assistance Center. Supporting partners are the City University of New York, the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, and the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition.