

MEMORANDUM

TO: Arkansas Senate Education Committee
Arkansas House Education Committee

FR: Adult Education Administrators
Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Desha, Drew, and Lincoln Counties

Date: April 4, 2012

Attached you will find a copy of a letter sent to Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr. and Deputy Director James H. "Jim" Smith, Jr., Arkansas Department of Career Education on April 2, 2012. This letter is a request for information as to the possible changes to the funding formula for adult education.

As is noted in the letter, the directors of the Adult Education programs in Southeast Arkansas have initiated discussions that will position the region for success in the future. Due to the several potential implications for both our staffs and most importantly, the people we serve --- we ask for your assistance in ensuring that the information is provided in a timely manner. We also request that you support our call for a phase-in of no less than two years so that proper planning can be conducted and services will not be disrupted.

In addition, we also have the following concerns:

- Significant movement of resources from rural areas. This is due to the connection of a dollar amount to the number of eligible person(s) in a service region and our lack of population concentration.
- Minimum cost of basic operations is not recognized in a per-student funding strategy. Indeed more resources are needed when more are served; however, certain cost will be the same regardless of program size. This will ultimately translate to a higher per-student expense in rural areas.
- Greater numbers of centers and satellites, would assist with increasing accessibility in rural areas where public transportation is not available; however, operating an adequate number of sites is not possible with the projected funding.
- Lack of recognition of role of scope beyond just GED completion. English as a Second Language, post-secondary preparation, WAGE and other workplace programs are also integral to adult education programs statewide. In each county, program administrators stay attuned to their communities' needs and consequently offer the program components that are needed in order to remain cost efficient.

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- Standards that have been established will cost more than anticipated. The estimated budget of \$470,000 per 14,000 eligible citizens will not be adequate to meet the criteria specified in the new standards. Based on our collective experience of providing programs in rural areas, we project that the cost will be much higher than \$470,000 -- If we are to serve a full 14,000 people.

We appreciate your continued support of Adult Education in Arkansas. Should you have any questions or need any additional information please do not hesitate to contact any director in the region.

Cc: Governor Mike Beebe