

The Alert

Newsletter of the CTA Adult Education Caucus

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Shape the future!

The CTA Adult Education Caucus is part of the powerful CTA (California Teachers' Association) to put forward bills that support our programs.

Next Meeting

Friday

March 20, 2009

4:30—6:30 PM

Bonaventure Hotel

Los Angeles

International Lounge,
3rd Floor

Come and work with
us to make history!

Join the CTA Adult Ed
Caucus!

Matthew Kogan

CTA-AEC Chair

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The State Budget's Impact on Adult Education

By Ernest Kettenring
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Evidently, being 47th in the nation in per capital funding for education is proof that California's schools are over-funded. In February, Sacramento reduced funding for our schools, colleges, and universities—its latest step in moving California toward Third World status.

Last August, the legislature passed a budget that was pronounced unbalanced even before the governor signed it. By early 2009, the projected structural deficit was estimated to exceed \$42 billion, and growing every day. Last month, the legislature finally passed a revised budget resembling voodoo economics, but it has at least pushed the brink of disaster further into the future.

How did adult education fare?

Current Year Budget (FY 2008)

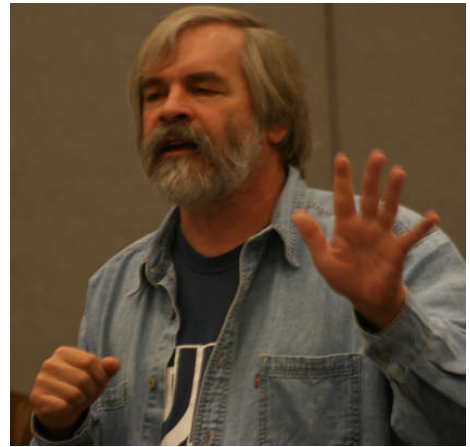
The current year's Adult Block Entitlement is cut 15.38%. This fiscal year is already two-thirds completed, making it very difficult for many districts to balance their budgets by June 30.

Budget Year (FY 2009)

For next year, beginning July 1, the budget makes a further 4.46% cut, on top of this year's 15.38% cut, for a total reduction of 19.84% compared to a year ago.

Tier Three "Flexibility" for the Adult Block Entitlement

Categorical funds are supplemental, meaning that they are to supplement base funding for schools. To insure that school districts would



Ernest Kettenring

devote funds to specific priorities, the state assembly over the years passed legislation targeting specific programs, labeled categorically funded programs. To ensure compliance with legislative intent, districts had to spend the categorical funds on their intended programs. Although the Adult Block Entitlement is the core funding source for adult education, rather than being supplemental, adult ed is nonetheless labeled a categorically funded program.

Now, to ameliorate the significant across-the-board cuts to K-12 education, most restrictions on categorically-funded programs have been waived. Districts have complete "flexibility" to use the funds from 43 categorical programs for any educational purpose, as determined by local school boards.

As to adult education, districts will receive their adult block entitlement money from the state whether or not they actually operate an adult education program.

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The State Budget's Impact on Adult Education

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The requirement to report ADA to the state to receive adult ed funds is waived through FY 2012 - those funds can now be spent on for any educational purpose. ROC/P and CBET allocations are also included in Tier 3, meaning that districts have total flexibility to use the funds for any educational purpose the school board deems necessary.

What does the future of adult education in California look like?

It is likely that some small districts will eliminate their adult ed programs altogether. It is also likely that some districts facing extreme fiscal challenges will significantly curtail their adult ed programs.

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), a well-respected non-partisan advisory function of the state legislature, released a budget analysis last month that addresses funding for adult ed programs ("Proposition 98 Educational Programs" [available on the UTLA Adult Ed website, www.aeutla.net]).

The LAO has determined that the 2.5% annual enrollment growth in the adult block entitlement is excessive, having grown at a rate faster than the growth of the state's adult population. The office calculates that, since the 1990s, the adult ed budget has grown some 25% larger than is justified. "As a result, many adult education providers cannot serve enough students to earn their full state entitlements, and those who can, often do so in part by offering enrichment classes." The LAO recommends that the legislature cut the state's adult block entitlement by 25% to adjust for this excess growth in the budget. The LAO believes that "This reduction would have virtually no impact on core adult education classes such as English as a second language and adult basic education." While the state's reduction of the adult block entitlement by

20.4% was driven more by politics than budgetary prudence, the LAO's report provides justification for the cuts that have been enacted.

As to the state's ROC/P programs, the report states that "Changing the timeframe for phasing out adult services could save the state roughly \$100 million... This would result in fewer adults being offered no-fee career technical education in 2009-10."

While the LAO's recommendations are only advisory to the legislature, they often form the basis for future legislative action. A recent "Labor Force Status" analysis of CASAS data by the Department of Education indicates that approximately one-third of the state's adult ed allocation, some \$250 million, is going to retirees and others not seeking work. Of those who indicated they were taking adult ed classes to get a job, only 12% actually did so.

A primary stated purpose for funding adult education by the state is to move students into more productive employment. The data currently available, taken together with the LAO's assessment of over-funding, does not give adult education supporters a strong basis from which to advocate for the program, let alone advocate for increased funding. Add to that a recent observation by an official in the Department of Education that the state's adult ed program lacks a clear mission and focus – it is apparent that something needs to change.

The above are assessments of the author, and do not represent official positions of either United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) or the Los Angeles Unified School District. Ernest Kettnering is chair of UTLA's Adult Education Committee.

Layoffs could be coming!

Support AB 1231!

AB 1231, a UTLA-sponsored bill, ensures that experienced teachers who are laid off for reasons unrelated to performance will be reinstated before the district can hire new teachers. If enacted, this bill will reduce administrative overhead costs involved in processing new employees, contribute to workforce stability, and reduce the number of individuals seeking unemployment benefits.

The CTA Adult Education Caucus vigorously endorses this bill, which was recently introduced by **Assemblymember Anthony Portantino**
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Contact him for more information, and contact your state legislator to express your strong support!