

The Voice

Newsletter of the UTLA Adult Education Committee

January 2010

Fighting for Our Survival

The Bad News

Adult Ed programs in California were cut 20% last year by the state, resulting in the layoff of approximately 500 of our teachers. There is no longer a state adult ed budget - all former categorically funded adult ed money is now given to school districts to spend any way they wish. That means what was once guaranteed funding for our programs may now go to K-12 classrooms instead. California continues to operate in deficit mode, and is projected to do so for at least the next three years. In December, Superintendent Cortines recommended another 20% cut to adult ed in LAUSD for the 2010-11 school year. It's rumored that there will be a further 20% cut for 2011-12, resulting in a cumulative cut of almost 50% from 2008-09. Several school districts in California have eliminated their adult ed programs: Santa Rosa, Redlands, Fullerton. Oh, and last week adult ed teachers in Oakland (the fifth largest in the state) were told that all non-tenured teachers will be terminated in June.

The Good News

However, demand for the education and training of adults is increasing. There's a widening skills gap between the education level of the population and job requirements by employers; the 12% who are unemployed in California need education and re-training. The value of an educated adult populace is in the public eye and gaining more traction than ever before: the colleges and universities v. prison funding debate; President Obama's American Graduation Initiative; Representative Patrick Kennedy's Adult Education and Economic Recovery Act legislation, the Edge Campaign for middle skills jobs, the National Commission on Adult Literacy's report on overcoming the crisis in the adult workforce. (See links below)

We Must Fight On

These are things to be built upon. Of course, we've got specific ideas about how to campaign against the proposed 20% cut for next year, just like we did last year with some success (B-Basis administration, reduced summer school administration, consolidation of schools). And we need to do some creative and collective thinking to develop solutions for secure and stable funding for the education of adults.

It's not hyperbole to say that adult education faces threats never before seen. So - do we accept our "fate"? Just shrug our shoulders and say, "Not much we can do"? Hope that others will recognize the value of our programs and fight for us? We are strong because of our passion and belief in the importance of what we teach. Is there anyone else or any other group who cares about the education of adults more than we do? Then it's up to us - to you. We must channel this energy to take action.

If you want the education of adults to continue and yes, to thrive, then you must participate. We need your help to strategize about what to do. Come to the Adult Ed Committee meeting on January 22. Come to the California Teachers Association (CTA) Adult Ed Caucus meeting on January 29.

Follow these links to more information on educating adults

"California's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs" and the EDGE campaign:

<http://www.skills2compete.org/California>

Rep.Kennedy's Adult Education and Economic Growth Act of 2009:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-3238>

The National Commission on Adult Literacy report, *Reach Higher America: Overcoming the Crisis in the U. S. Workforce*:

<http://www.nationalcommissiononadulthoodliteracy.org/report.html>

President Obama's American Graduation Initiative:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/Investing-in-Education-The-American-Graduation-Initiative/>

and here: http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Excerpts-of-the-Presidents-remarks-in-Warren-Michigan-and-fact-sheet-on-the-American-Graduation-Initiative/

Meeting dates--Be there!

Next UTLA Adult Ed Committee meeting
Friday, January 22, 5:30 p.m., Room 911
UTLA, 3303 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. 90010

Next CTA Adult Ed Caucus meeting
Friday, January 29, 4:30 p.m.
Westin Bonaventure Hotel, 404 S. Figueroa, L.A. 90071

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