

remarks. Johan Uvin, Acting Assistant Secretary of Education (OCTAE), gave the keynote speech.

Daniel McGrath concluded the event with a videoed review of PIAAC's future directions. For example, among many upcoming activities (2016–2023) are the release of the standalone reports on the prison population (now estimated for May 2016) and young adults (June 2016). In 2016, AIR will also re-issue the U.S. "*First Report*" incorporating supplemental data. In 2017, more U.S. data will be collected, and a five-year update will be issued for all OECD countries participating in the PIAAC assessment. In due course, NCES will seek input on the design of PIAAC's second cycle to begin in 2021, which will add some new population groups.

For the detailed conference agenda, copies of the research paper summaries, and videos of all presentations, [CLICK HERE](#). For information about the PIAAC generally, [GO HERE](#). For clarification on upcoming activities or to schedule a PIAAC presentation in your institution or locale, [GO HERE](#) or email piaac@air.gov.



IMPLEMENTING WIOA: Help Comes In Many Forms

Since the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was enacted in mid-2014, a wide range of informational, analytic, and implementation resources have been developed to help state and local planners

implement the Act. Some of it has been widely publicized, especially the always excellent work of the [Center for Law and Social Policy](#) (CLASP), the [National Skills Coalition](#) (NSC), and [Jobs for the Future](#), whose websites carry all kinds of useful WIOA material.

Extensive ongoing support, often under-recognized, is also provided by federal agencies collaborating on WIOA. For example, the Health & Human Services [website](#) provides an array of guidelines and information resources. So does DOL, at a [site operated by the Employment and Training Administration](#) (ETA). Less than a month ago (Jan. 26–28), on behalf of these two agencies and the Department of Education, and in cooperation with the National Governors Association, the National Association of Workforce Boards, and others, ETA sponsored a [joint convening of WIOA stakeholder groups](#) in Washington to discuss implementation issues. For those unable to attend, ETA's WIOA Innovation & Opportunity Network is providing [information about the workshops and plenary sessions](#), as well as access to the meeting's [handouts, slides, and participant list](#).

ETA's Innovation & Opportunity Network (ION) is filled with all kinds of resources, supplemented on a regular basis, to help Adult Education & Workforce Skills development professionals understand and implement WIOA. The site offers news releases and blogs, policy guidance, information on past and coming webinars, engagement of employers, and much more.

The Department of Education posts material on the ION site, but it also maintains its own [OCTAE WIOA site and repertory of resources](#). There is a wealth of information about WIOA, announcements and memoranda, the results of requests for comments, notices of proposed rule making, recorded presentations, a range of topical fact sheets (including one on [Corrections Education](#) and another on [English Language Acquisition](#)), and other WIOA resources. OCTAE also publishes a free online newsletter titled [OCTAE Connection](#). It is devoted to OCTAE's full range of programs including WIOA.



NEWS IN BRIEF



Funding Proposed for 2017 Treats Adult Education as

Second Class. If the 2017 budget of the U.S. Department of Education is appropriated as requested by the President, state basic grants (which includes ESL/Civics at \$69,835 million) would remain frozen at the 2016 level of \$581,955 million. National Leadership activities would increase by \$11 million to a total of \$24.7 million. Although every increase that occurs for Adult Education is a step in the right direction, the proposed budget for the core parts of Title I in 2017 would be at the WIOA authorized level (though still less than needed), while Adult Education basic state grants would remain far below the WIOA authorized level (of \$635,198 million). [Ed. Note: This reflects an apparently limited understanding by the Administration about the role and significance of Adult Education in meeting the nation's employability and civic opportunity and justice goals, and a lack of awareness that Adult Education programs were already financially strapped in the extreme before WIOA called upon them to expand their mission and coordinate with Title I programs.] To access the budget document (see pp. M-25 and following), [CLICK HERE](#).



WIOA State Plans Due April 1st. It was announced at the January 2016 WIOA stakeholders meeting (see *Implementing WIOA* feature above) that the due date for state plans has been extended from March 1st to April 1st. On February 22, the [final requirements for the State Unified Plans](#) required under WIOA were released.



The Barbara Bush Foundation Adult Literacy XPRIZE

Program, funded by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, recently announced that as a result of the team application process, it has accepted proposals from 109 teams in 15 countries. These competing teams will have until December 15, 2016 to turn in their final submissions. Up to 15 of the contenders will then be selected by an independent panel of judges to join in a 12-month field test with thousands of adult learners, including three cities in the U.S. A grand prize of \$3 million will be awarded to the field test team with the best performance. Two \$1 million achievement awards will be given to the programs that have the best performing programs for native English speakers and English language learners. All finalist teams that meet a minimum performance benchmark will receive some monetary award. The city that "encourages the greatest percentage of its adult learners to download and use any of the finalist solutions over a 6-month period" will win a prize of \$1 million. The XPRIZE advisory board includes eight educators and social scientists including Brenda Dann-Messier, former Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical, and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).



A **New York Times** editorial on February 16, titled [A College Education for Prisoners](#), reports that states are backing away from "draconian" sentencing policies by "trying to turn around the prison juggernaut by steering drug addicts into treatment instead of jail and retooling parole systems that once sent people back to prison for technical violation." The article calls for keeping people from lapsing back into criminal activity and prison re-entry by providing jobs skills and a college education that make them "marketable employees." It says that more than 200 institutions in 47 states have already begun or plan to start such prisoner re-entry programs. And it states that the public will save \$4 to \$5 in reimprisonment costs for every \$1 it spends on prison education.



CEO Michael Villaire of the **Institute for Healthcare**

Advancement has announced that IHA is in the process of developing a ***Certificate Program in Health Literacy***. IHA will appoint a Job Analysis Task Force and work with testing experts. The Task force is scheduled to hold its first meeting in early April. Completion of the job analysis study and release of a final report is scheduled for May 2017. For more information, email mvilleire@iha4health.org.



The Lumina Foundation is funding a major grant program, called ***Connecting Credentials***. The initiative presently has five work groups preparing frameworks and suggestions for collective action by postsecondary education, employers and labor unions, community-based organizations, foundations, and others to develop a competency-based, learning-centered credentialing system in the U.S. The groups are organized around these topics: *developing common language as the basis for a connected credentialing system...using real-time data and technology to empower credential users and create continuous feedback...creating end-to-end quality assurance processes to support portability and trust of credentials...advancing scalable employer engagement activities to improve demand signals and increase relevancy/currency of credentials... and designing flexible credentialing pathways leading to family-sustaining jobs to increase quality*. The recommendations of these groups will be consolidated into a single document to be shared with participants at Lumina's October 2016 Credentialing Summit. Meanwhile, the 2015 Summit in October 2015 resulted in a report titled [***Connecting Credentials: Lessons from the National Summit on Credentialing and Next Steps in the National Dialogue***](#) (Jan. 2016). For more information about the Lumina program, go to [**Lumina's website**](#). Visit [**Lumina's Resources page**](#) for a variety of publications issued recently on the credentialing theme.



Applications Invited for the Eugene Owen Scholarship Award. In April 2015, the Eugene Owen Scholarship Award

program was formed and publicly [announced](#). Mr. Owen's family placed the award at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan. It honors Owen's 30 years of service at the National Center for Education Statistics. The award, for which applications are now being sought, will provide the winner a fee waiver and stipend to attend the ICPSR Summer Program. Applicants must be either senior graduate students or recent PhD awardees who have professional interests in one of three areas: *(1) advancing cross-national research on K-12 student achievement, (2) advancing cross-national research on college- or university-level achievement, or (3) understanding the role of teaching from a cross-national perspective.* The application deadline is April 30, 2016. To apply for the program and get the specific guidelines and eligibility criteria, [CLICK HERE](#).



Donations Invited for the Samuel Halperin Lecture and Youth Public Service Award by The American Youth Policy Forum. AYPF was founded by Sam Halperin. His life's work is recognized through this annual award, given in partnership with the Institute for Educational Leadership, which he co-founded. The lecture features an established expert to speak about the problems many youth face in America as they try to succeed in life and participate fully as citizens. Each year the award goes to a young person who has surmounted his or her serious personal difficulties and found a path to successfully serving others. This year's Lecture and Award event will be April 18th in Washington, D.C. Michele Cahill, Distinguished Fellow in Education and Youth Development at the National Center for Civic Innovation will give the keynote speech. The awardee will be named on that occasion and presented with a \$1,000 award. To learn more and to consider a donation, [CLICK HERE](#).



CONFINTEA Research Scholarships 2016. The [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](#) (UIL) will call next month (March) for applications for its annual CONFINTEA research scholarships. The

awards are given to education professionals from UNESCO member states to carry out projects that will "build on research that benefits adult education and lifelong learning in their countries." Awardees will spend a month at the UIL in Hamburg, Germany, where they will have access to the extensive UIL library and interact with UIL staff in various fields. For application guidelines and further information, [CLICK HERE](#). Or contact the CONFINTEA Scholarship Coordinator, Lisa Krolak, by email at l.krolak@unesco.org. [Notes: *CONFINTEA=Conférence internationale sur l'éducator des adultes. *UIL publishes an interesting online newsletter, a journal, and other publications that can be accessed [HERE](#).]



Upcoming Forums, Webinars, & Panels

- (1) ***Promoting Greater Hispanic Participation in the Labor Market and Career Pathways*** is the theme of a 5-day LINCS panel discussion, that will run through February 26th. The panel is looking at key questions related to Hispanics in the workforce, with a focus on helping Hispanics benefit from career pathways programs and move into middle-skill careers. It draws on the Department of Education's report [Investing in the Skills Development of Hispanics](#). To join the discussion, go to LINCS at <https://community.lincs.ed.gov>.
- (2) ***Progress Monitoring with College and Career Readiness Keys for Success*** is a Jobs for the Future webinar for those working to expand early college and career pathways, including schools, colleges, businesses, and CBOs. It is scheduled for Feb. 26th from 4-5pm EST. To get more details and to register, [CLICK HERE](#).
- (3) ***Lessons Learned from Networks for Integrating New Americans*** will be offered by World Education on Feb. 29 at 2-3:30 pm EST. The Networks program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, was carried out by World Education and other groups. Its mission was to strengthen the role of Adult Education programs in improving immigrants' access to effective ESL programs and moving immigrants

along the path to citizenship and career development. The five community networks that made up the initiative will take part in the discussion. Participants will receive a copy of paper reflecting the webinar's themes. To register, [CLICK HERE](#).

(4) ***The Politics of Adult Literacy Education in the U.S.*** will be the subject of a symposium on April 28th, 2016 sponsored by the TESOL Club (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) at the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures of the California State University in Fullerton. Stephen Reder, Emeritus Professor at Portland State University, will be the keynote speaker. The symposium will deal with "the theory, research, policy, and pedagogy of quality adult literacy programs, with a focus on successful community-based and publicly-funded programs designed to assist adult ESL immigrants." For details contact Marissa Danielsen, mdanielsen@csu.fullerton.edu.

(5) A three-day ***Workforce Development Forum*** will be given by National Council of La Raza in Las Vegas from May 4-6, 2016. For details about the event and to register [CLICK HERE](#).

(6) ***Creating a Vision for Health Literacy's Future*** is the theme of the 15th Annual Health Literacy Conference to be held in Anaheim, CA from May 4th-6th. For information and to register, [CLICK HERE](#).

(7) The **2016 ENRICH Healthcare Communication Course & Research Forum** will be held June 16-19 at Yale University in New Haven, CT. Its theme will be *Diverse Voices, Common Vision: Fostering Effective Healthcare Communication Through Inclusion*. ENRICH is an intensive 4-day course for people who want to improve their healthcare communication skills and/or ability to teach these skills. The Research Forum is for junior and senior researchers in healthcare communications. For more information [GO HERE](#).



The **AFL-CIO's Working for America Institute (WAI)** has announced a new ***Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT)***

Apprenticeship Program. WAI already operates many apprentice programs. It is working on this one with various partnership organizations and entities, including Jobs for the Future, the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (responsible for the program design), the U.S. Department of Labor, labor federations in a growing number of states, and a wide array of manufacturing employers and unions. The IMT program provides some 264 hours of instruction and extensive on-the-job learning that leads to journey-level certification. WAI works to build union and workers' capacity in a changing workplace and advocates for effective employment and training policies including jobs that pay family sustaining wages. It provides competency-based career pathways and stackable industry-recognized credentials. For more info contact WAI's new Executive Director, Daniel Marschall, at marshad@workingforamerica.org.

✓ ***New Skills for Youth*** is a \$75 million worldwide grant program of **JPMorgan Chase and Company**. It aims to help young people along pathways to high-quality training and skills to compete for jobs. In a major partnership, JPMorgan Chase recently joined with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in a \$35 million U.S. competition to help states improve and expand their career and technical education (CTE) systems for young people. Two main emphases are prioritizing career readiness indicators in state accountability systems and creating incentives for youth to earn certifications and credentials in high-demand fields. By spring, some 20 states will receive \$100,000 grants to plan revamped CTE programs and by fall up to 10 states will receive up to \$2 million over three years to implement the systems. CCSSO is managing the grant program and will convene an advisory group to review applications and choose the winners. Members include Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday and Vice President of Education Policy Cheryl Oldham of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. For a detailed brochure about the *New Skills for Youth* program, [CLICK HERE](#).

✓ More information is becoming available about the **National Public**

Awareness Campaign of the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE), announced in a recent issue of the NCAL ENews.

The goal is to help raise the visibility of adult education nationwide.

For one strand of the Campaign, [Ward Circle Strategies](#) in

Washington D.C. is developing a video for national distribution, under the sponsorship of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. COABE is also organizing a "dual Capitol Hill Days" event on April 26th and September 28th for state association leaders. Information about that event will be available in due course along with news about other Campaign activities. For additional details on current activity, email COABE's Executive Director at

sharonbonney@coabe.org. [Note: *Thanks to the generosity of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, the Adult Learner, Teacher of the Year, and Administrator of the Year awards to be given at this year's COABE Conference have been increased from \$1,000 to \$10,000 each.*]



In the U.S., a Growing Recognition: College Isn't for

Everyone is an article by Lauren Camera (Feb. 1) for [U.S. News & World Report](#). It discusses in candid terms the pros and cons of efforts in the states to lower thresholds for education proficiency, including the GED Testing Service's recent decision to lower its passing score. It also challenges two commonly-held assumptions in the U.S., that college attendance should automatically be for everyone, and that a high school diploma or equivalent is an adequate predictor of college perseverance and success or job-readiness. In fact, according to the article, there is solid *evidence* that passing the GED and alternative diploma programs do not necessarily mean that the graduates are qualified for or should go on to college. For example, one study cited (American Council on Education, 2009) indicates that of 1,000 GED-takers, only 307 enrolled in some kind of postsecondary education within five years, and that three-fourths of them dropped out after only one semester. Moreover, according to the article, nearly half of all low-income high school graduates do not enroll in college at all, mostly because high school standards and higher education expectations are misaligned. Noting that the proficiency lowering assessments and related activities are often motivated by a worthy goal, the author says that to keep the door to higher education

completely open lowers the bar and creates "a double-edged sword" – because the rate of college failure and completion is so high. For example, of the 307 enrollees mentioned above, only 17 went on to complete a degree or certificate. One solution suggested is a two-tiered diploma and GED, where students who pass college- and career-ready exams get an "academic" diploma and those who do not receive a "basic" diploma. The article ([CLICK HERE](#)) aims to encourage new thinking in Adult Education, including its network of community college providers.



[**Winning on Developmental Education**](#), a Feb. 18th article by Reynaldo Garcia and Scott Ralls for [**Inside Higher Ed**](#), discusses the importance of developmental education in moving low-skilled, at-risk adults toward community college readiness. The piece cites Washington's I-BEST, the City University of New York's Start program, and other efforts as examples of effective programming. The authors, who co-chair the [**Policy Leadership Trust for Student Success**](#) at Jobs for the Future, argue that public investments should reward colleges that help the most at-risk students persist. They say that "Increasing investment in institutions dedicated to opening their doors to those who have long been denied opportunity isn't optional. It's the only route to a skilled and prosperous workforce and a vibrant democracy." [Also see *Getting Developmental Education Up to Speed* below.]



Integrating Career Pathways Into ABE in High-Need Cities. Penn State University's Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, with a two-year grant from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), is working with organizations in Houston, Miami-Dade County, and Chicago to explore how adult basic education providers in those cities are integrating career pathways into their ABE services. Some 175 provider groups have been invited to take part in a survey of practices and outcomes. Focus group interviews and case studies are being carried out as well. Preliminary project findings will be presented at the annual [**COABE conference in Texas**](#) in April. For more information about the IES/Penn State project, [CLICK HERE](#), or contact project

director Esther Prins at esp150@psu.edu.



Nominations for a CareerSTAT Frontline Health Care Worker Champion are being invited by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, a partnership of numerous organizations including Jobs for the Future. The Joyce Foundation funds the program. The application deadline is March 4, 2016. The winner this year will be the 20th health care provider so honored to date. The award recognizes health care organizations in communities across the country that invest in their frontline workers by "promoting internal career progression and access to training and skills development opportunities." For information and an application form, [GO HERE](#), or by email contact Elicia Wilson, Senior Program Manager, Jobs for the Future, at ewilson@jff.org.



The **National Coalition for Literacy and Proliteracy** have joined forces to prepare an adult education survey and fact sheet for the presidential candidates. The material, developed in cooperation with NCAL and other NCL members, was transmitted to the candidates by letter (text reprinted below). The items are [posted at the NCL website](#) as a resource for the Adult Education field. NCL will post candidate survey responses in due course.

Dear _____:

As President of the United States, you will have the responsibility to ensure America's economic competitiveness in the 21st century. This will be a daunting challenge. More than 36 million adults in America have low basic reading, writing, and math skills. An even larger number lack the ability to solve problems in technology-rich environments, a skill of growing importance.

This problem has an adverse impact on the employability and earnings of American adults and, equally important, on our nation's economic and social well-being. It promotes income inequality while undermining our democracy and founding principles. It costs our nation billions of dollars annually in lost revenue and in increased costs for health care, corrections, welfare, and unemployment.

Investing in adult education can reverse these trends. But the harsh reality is that adult education programs are operating on starvation budgets, unable to serve more than a fraction of students in need. Long waiting lists are a fact of life for 72% of our programs in all 50 states. Even as we ask our system to do much more, federal and state funding for adult education and workforce skills development has declined.

This high-priority challenge requires presidential leadership. We urge you to make adult education a priority and commit to improving services and outreach for our under-skilled adults through a sustained multi-year investment commensurate with the scale of the need. We respectfully ask that you review and answer the questions attached, and pledge your support for adult education and workforce skills development in America.

If you would find it helpful, we would be pleased to meet with you or a member of your staff.

Best Regards,

Peter Waite

Jeff Carter



OTHER BRIGHT LIGHTS



From the **Corporation for a Skilled Workforce** – (1) CSW has just released a [2016 Data Update](#) to its 2013 *Apples to Apples: Making Data Work for Community-Based Workforce Development Programs*. The update gives data for some 259 programs between 2010 and 2014. It reflects a variety of populations served, strategies used, and organizational contexts. (2) CSW publishes a monthly "*Connecting*

Credentials E–Newsletter, NEWS & NOTES," that reports on the credentialing activities of Lumina and other organizations working on the credentialing front. To subscribe to the newsletter, [CLICK HERE](#). The February 2016 issue of *NEWS & NOTES* lists upcoming Lumina webinars.



From **America's Promise Alliance** (APA) -- Partnering with the Alliance for Excellent Education, and Johns Hopkins University School of Education, APA has issued a new report on high school graduation rates. Titled [**2016 Building a Grad National Data Brief: Overview of 2013–14 High School Graduation Rates**](#), the 9–page report presents facts, maps, tables and charts, and analysis showing that while the U.S. high school graduation rate hit a record high of 82.3 for the class of 2014, the nation is not on track to reach its goal of a 90% on–time graduation rate by 2020. It also shows that the graduation rates of low–income, students of color, the disabled, and English–language learners are disproportionately low. A state–by–state section offers a "report card" on variations among the states.



From the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** – A new policy brief by the Foundation explores the persistently wide gap in savings and assets between white families and families of color. [**Investing in America's Dramatic Racial Wealth Gap**](#) offers federal policy changes that could help reverse the trend in the interest of fostering self–sufficiency among disadvantaged families and their children.



From **MDRC** – [**Getting Developmental Education Up to Speed**](#) is a two–page brief that looks at MDRC's research on this subject. One finding is that 40 percent of all entering college students, and more than half of all community college entrants, must take at least one "remedial course." The brief looks at research in several areas of developmental education reform. [Note: Still relevant ideas from the past on this subject can be found in [**Forging New Partnerships: Adult & Developmental Education in Community Colleges**](#), a working paper prepared by Hunter Boylan for the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy in Dec. 2004.]



The HHS Office of Disease Prevention and Health

Promotion has issued [*The 2nd edition of Health Literacy Online*](#). It includes attention to low-skilled adults and provides findings of research on the impact of limited literacy on the use of healthcare data available on websites and mobile devices. Other new resources that adult and health literacy educators may wish to check out are a new smartphone app, called [*SA Access*](#), developed by students at the University of Texas Health Science Center for The Health Collaborative and a related [*Pew Research Center fact sheet*](#).



From the **National Skills Coalition** – (1) NSC's ***Workforce Data Quality Campaign*** is based on a partnership of some 11 national stakeholder groups including NSC, CLASP, the Association for Community & Technical Education, and the Association of Public Data Users. It advocates and seeks Congressional support for inclusive, aligned, market-relevant data systems so as to increase the nation's skilled workforce and help U.S. industries compete in a changing economy. The project started in 2012. WDQC recently expanded its website to provide data on higher education and workforce data for every state and the District of Columbia. The [*WDQC website*](#) now includes a summary of each state's data system along with links to supplemental information and related scorecards. (2) NSC reports that some 270 people attended its ***2016 Skills Summit*** held from Feb. 7th–9th, a sizeable increase over last year. For a detailed account of the 2016 Summit activities, speakers, and materials [*CLICK HERE*](#). Note that all Summit materials are available by link at the bottom of that page, under Looking Ahead to 2017.



From the **Center for Law & Social Policy (CLASP)** – [*Questions to Consider When Reviewing Draft WIOA State Plans*](#) is a list of questions (Jan. 2016) that CLASP urges plan reviewers to consider as they work to achieve stronger implementation of key WIOA provisions that bear on the economic and career success of low-income youth and adults. The document covers WIOA Titles I and II.



From **Jobs for the Future** – [*The Implications of Deeper Learning for Adolescent Immigrants and English Language Learners*](#)

is a new report arguing that English language learners in high schools have strengths that not only enable them to master academic content and skills but to learn how to "work collaboratively, think critically, communicate effectively, and monitor and direct" their own learning. JFF's fundamental question is: what will high school students need to do to prepare for college and job and civic readiness, and what are the implications for policy and practice?

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