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Board of Regents

University System of Ohio

ADULT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

FRIDAY FACTS

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ADULT BASIC AND LITERACY EDUCATION

May 1, 2009

Stackable Certificates – Where are we now?

Basic and Advanced Skills Certificates

Competencies for math, reading and writing have been defined for the Basic and Advanced Skills Stackable Certificates. These competencies were used as a basis for the new ABLE content standards. The new standards are in the process of final validation and will be released once that has occurred. Once validated, the new standards will be used by all ABLE programs. This will provide one cohesive set of standards combined for student achievement and receipt of the Basic and Advanced Skills Stackable Certificates. Completion of Level 4 (8.9 grade level) defines the achievement of the Basic Skills Certificate and completion of Level 6 (12.9) defines the achievement of the Advanced Skills Certificate.

Certificate templates for both the Basic and Advanced Skills Certificates are being developed for ABLE program use. Achievement of these certificates will be standardized and recorded in ABLELink. More information will be forthcoming.

College- and Work-Ready Skills Certificates

Starting in May, committees will determine the competencies that define the College- and Work-Ready Skills Certificates. These competencies include math, English, IT foundations and study and critical thinking skills. Skills from the College Readiness Expectations and other college readiness standards, not covered by ABLE, will be included in this certificate. Since the Advanced Skills Certificate covers skills up to 12.9, the math and English in the College- and Work-Ready Certificate may overlap some of the higher level skills that fall in the Advanced Skills Certificate. This overlap may be needed for the following reasons:

- Students may leave ABLE prior to completing the Advanced Skills Certificate

- Students may take the GED test prior to completing the competencies covered in the Advanced Skills Certificate (through Level 6)
- Students may enter the Community College door and may score in the range to complete these higher level remedial education courses before “tipping” into credit-bearing coursework

Remember, ABLE students can be concurrently enrolled in College- and Work-Ready Certificate courses while working on skills in lower levels provided through ABLE as long as ABLE instruction is not in the same subject area for which the student is paying tuition. As an example, an ABLE student could be working on an Advanced Skills Certificate in ABLE while taking the IT Foundations and Study and Critical Thinking Skills courses offered by the community college or adult career technical center.

The College- and Work-Ready Skills Certificates will be completed by the first of August.

Technical Certificates

A Request for Proposals (RFP) is being developed to support the awarding of technical certificates. The RFP will be released in FY 2010. The exact timeline has not been established.

The purpose of the grant is to pilot partnerships between ABLE, community colleges, and adult career technical center programs in the issuance of technical certificates tied to employer needs within the Economic Development Regions in support of the Stackable Certificate Early Adopters. These certificates would be industry-recognized credentials or possibly ones that the Ohio Skills Bank would develop if not available, e.g. certificates for green jobs. The focus will be on supporting entry-level adults into the regional career pathways.

Other features of this project include:

- Technical certificates could be those that qualify for CT2 articulation, or if they do not, ones that support a career pathway or lead to certificates that qualify for CT2, e.g. STNA.
- Partnerships working within the new Adult Concurrent Enrollment policy.
- Contextualized academic instruction provided by ABLE providers that supports the students' concurrent enrollment in the technical certificate program provided by the community college and/or adult technical education center.
- Basic and Advanced Skills Certificates that can be customized by including endorsements of other skills required by the employer. An example might be the soft/employability skills assessed through WorkKeys.

Assessment Alignment

A work group is being convened to address the assessments for the Stackable Certificates. Assessment experts from ABLE, community colleges and career centers are being utilized to ensure that the system is effective in measuring the alignment of certificate competencies. Work group members will be

asked to meet once during May and again in June, 2009 with various tasks to be completed at and between the two meetings.

The tasks to be completed by this Work Group are the following, organized by two categories:

OHIO STACKABLE CERTIFICATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

1. Reviewing and discussing existing tests for inclusion as Basic and Advanced Stackable Certificate performance standards, such as traditional, suitable NRS tests (TABE, CASAS, BEST Plus/Literacy) and other tests (COMPASS; Accuplacer; ETS P-D-Q; Wonderlic GAIN; Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test - MAPT)
2. Evaluating traditional and other tests against criteria to develop a set of tests for review
3. Establishing minimal competence and score points for selected tests

CERTIFICATION ALIGNMENT

1. Reviewing concepts of certificates and certification, especially those that fit with OSB “pathways”
2. Reviewing certificates, certifications and licenses that may be appropriate for ABLE learners

As a reminder, during the Stackable Certificate pilot phase, ABLE programs should be using the NRS approved assessments to determine certificate achievement. In addition, we have asked that you conduct an additional assessment, such as COMPASS, Accuplacer or WorkKeys to confirm the achievement at the 8.9 and 12.9 levels. This data will be used by this Work Group.

Constructing Futures Initiative – an Economic Stimulus Initiative Involving ABLE

Goal: The goal of the Constructing Futures Initiative is to train Ohioans of historically underrepresented populations in the building trades so that they may excel in a career in union construction, ultimately leading to a family-sustaining wage and occupation.

Total Funds: The initiative will be funded with **\$4 million** from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Statewide Workforce funds in Fiscal Year 2010.

Grant Awards: A competitive request for proposals will be released statewide and make available \$300,000 for a single workforce investment board applicant and \$500,000 for two or more workforce investment boards who apply together. Applicants must provide a 50% match which can come from any or all of the partners to the application.

Target Population: This initiative will target minority groups, women, veterans, dislocated workers, and ex-offenders. Each local workforce investment area will recruit eligible participants for awarded programs.

Eligible Applicants/ Required Partners: Workforce Investment Boards, Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors, and University System of Ohio institutions, including ABLE programs.

Optional Partners: Community Non-profits, Faith based organizations, Community Action Agencies, Local Governments, One Stop agencies

Eligible Activities: Eligible activities for grant funds include outreach to targeted populations, supportive services (including both pre-apprenticeship and during apprenticeship), basic literacy and GED attainment through University System of Ohio institutions, training stipends for pre-apprentices while in classroom work, and eligible tools and equipment. Language will be included in the RFP indicating that the monies being allocated to entities must have letters of support from collaborating Registered Apprenticeship Programs in various occupations, thus ensuring a pathway to self-sustaining living wage and benefit packages as well as transferable skills sets.

RFP Release Date: Early June, 2009

ABLE Professional Development is #2 Nationwide on iTunes University

The State of Ohio, in collaboration with Apple's iTunes U, launched a new initiative called Ohio iTunes U in February at the 2009 eTech Ohio Educational Technology Conference in Columbus. The Northeast ABLE Resource Center was one of the original contributors and offered 10 Resource Center Network (RCN) alternative delivery professional development trainings. Just this week the trainings were featured on the front page of iTunes U Teaching and Education section alongside George Lucas' Edutopia, Stanford University and MIT and registered as the second most downloaded links on the page.

Ohio on iTunes U provides digital media resources free of charge with unlimited access. The iTunes U platform allows the state to showcase educational resources, professional development materials, best practices and student samples that have been produced by members of higher education, the K-12 community and a variety of Ohio content providers. Using this platform, the RCN will be able to provide instant access to dynamic alternative delivery professional development opportunities next year.

Several states, including Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maine, have iTunes U projects in place. Their sites provide access to educational and professional development plus examples of educators' creativity and innovation. The State of Ohio and iTunes hope to meet the same goals through this innovative and recognized delivery system.

To **get started using iTunes U**, you must have the iTunes program installed on your computer. You can download iTunes for free from Apple's website at <http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/>. Once iTunes is installed, click on the links provided to launch iTunes and visit iTunes U: <http://deimos3.apple.com/indigo/main/main.xml>.

To access **Ohio on iTunes U** directly click on <http://deimos3.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/eTech-ohio-gov-public>.

To view the **Northeast ABLE Resource Center** on Ohio iTunes U, visit this page: <http://deimos3.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/eTech-ohio-gov-public.1889383680>. For

more information on **what iTunes University is**, visit <http://www.apple.com/education/mobile-learning/>.

Fiscal Reminders

May 31 – Last day for budget revisions for FY 2009

June 18 – Last day that OBR Fiscal Services Office will accept requests for subsidy payments for Fiscal Year 2009; Project Cash Requests (PCRs) received after June 18 will be paid out after July 1

ABLE Grant Resources

Please check the ABLE RFP website periodically for grant resource additions. The PowerPoint used during the Bidders' Conference and the taped video are now online. For more information, please go to: <http://www.uso.edu/network/workforce/rfps/index.php>

Quote of the Week

“The greatest oak was once a little nut who held its ground.” – Author Unknown