

LAO Provides Overview of Adult Education

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The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), the Legislature's nonpartisan fiscal advisor, issued a report to the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 1 on Education, which provided an overview of adult education in California. The report provided background and an assessment of the adult education program including key policy issues that remain unresolved.

According to the report, school districts and the California Community Colleges (CCC) are the main providers of adult education in California. The state restructured its adult education system in 2013-14 due to historical fragmentation between school districts and the community colleges. The new system made the following structural changes:

- Created 71 regional adult education consortia of school districts and community colleges in collaboration with other stakeholders
- Provided funding to develop and implement regional adult education plans
- Eliminated the K-12 adult education categorical program and folded funds into the Local Control Funding Formula
- Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) and CCC to make recommendations on aligning student assessments, adopting a common student identifier, and developing consistent fee policies across providers
- Requires the CCC Academic Senate and Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to make recommendations on establishing teacher reciprocity policies between school districts and CCC
- Requires each consortium to develop and update a three-year regional adult education plan
- Requires CDE and CCC to report annually on consortias' regional plans, types of service, and funding allocations

The report highlights the additional funding that continues to support adult education, including the state apportionment funding for CCC, federal funds from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Carl D. Perkins and Technical Education Act, and fees that are charged by school districts and the CCC.

In assessing the progress of the adult education restructuring, the LAO has found that some consortia are more effective than others in redistricting and coordinating services, that the 2015-16 CDE and CCC annual report fell short of meeting statutory requirements, such as program outcomes and effectiveness, and that the following key policy issues remain unresolved:

- CDE and CCC laid out options for aligning assessment, data, and fee policies, but did not make any recommendations to the Legislature
- CCC Academic Senate and CTC laid out options for establishing teacher reciprocity, but did not make any recommendations
- To date, the Legislature has not taken action to align policies in these areas

The CDE and CCC report that they will convene workgroups in late spring to try and build consensus on recommendations for the unresolved policy issues and that they expect to implement a performance reporting system linking data from school districts, the CCC, and the Employment Development Department by 2017-18.

To access the LAO's report go to <http://www.lao.ca.gov/Publications/Detail/3628>.