

LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

Agency, state, and local program administrators used luncheon as an opportunity to discuss Adult Education initiatives with legislators.



Below: Representative Mike Burris—sponsor of key legislation supporting Arkansas Adult Education—converses with luncheon attendees.



Educators and legislators meet to share concerns for Adult Education interests.



This Issue

- Legislative Activity P.1
- Conferences P.2
- Student Stories P.2

Legislative Luncheon Held to Discuss Adult Education Interests

A legislative luncheon was hosted by the Arkansas Association for Continuing and Adult Education (AACAE) on March 17, 2009, at the Capitol Hill Building located on the state capitol grounds in Little Rock. The luncheon meeting served as a forum for individuals connected with Arkansas Adult Education to share program concerns, issues, and successes. Approximately 50 legislators attended.

Department of Workforce Education (DWE) Director, William L. “Bill” Walker and DWE Adult Education Division Deputy Director, Jim Smith, were invited by the AACAE Legislative Committee to address the group. Both Walker and Smith spoke on the importance of legislative backing to strengthen the Adult Education services in the state.

In his remarks Jim Smith emphasized the economic impact that GED® graduates and WAGE™ completers can have on the state’s economy.

Sandra Miller, President of AACAE, was impressed by the number of attendees and the visible support. “I was also impressed by the accessibility of the legislators,” said Miller.

Steve Clayton, President of the Arkansas Association for Administrators of Adult Education, felt the luncheon was a great “opportunity to share the enthusiasm of adult educators with various leaders of state government.”

AACAE Legislative Committee Chair, Patricia Bates, indicated that the program directors have been a “wonderful support for the legislative committee. This was evidenced by the number of people attending the luncheon and the positive interaction in the room that day.” Bates adds with assuredness, “With the efforts of all of us pulling together, we can secure the much needed funding to better serve the citizens of Arkansas.”

ADULT EDUCATION ADVISOR PROMOTES PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON D.C.

On March 16th, Dr. Philip Less, Adult Education Program Advisor, visited the Washington D.C. offices of Arkansas’s senators and congressmen to discuss the importance of adult education and English literacy. As pictured below Dr. Less met with Ms. Shannon Lovejoy (Legislative Correspondent for Senator Mark Pryor), Mr. Tony McClain and Ms. Emily Hildebrand (Legislative Assistants for Senator Blanche Lincoln), Mr. Anders Reynolds (Legislative Assistant for Congressman Marion Berry), and Mr. David Boling (Chief of Staff for Congressman Vic Snyder). The staff members were all very interested in learning about adult education in general and the success stories of adult learners in Arkansas. Dr. Less pointed out the positive return on investment that adult education has on the state’s economy and the need to provide more literacy services for the growing number of people who are unemployed and underemployed.



The Department of Workforce Education funds the Adult Education Division. The Adult Education Division provides programs and services statewide.

An Education Can Make A Difference!

Written by Jerry Smith,
A Recent Graduate of
Lincoln County Adult
Education Center

I dropped out of school about 12 years ago. I was just like any of the other kids. I thought I knew it all. I thought I had something better to do with my time. I was wrong!

I got married young and had two kids by the time I was 19, so I had to start working. I tried several low paying jobs and it didn't work out and then got one job that paid okay. Then my luck ran out when I was 28. I lost my job and had trouble finding a new one. So I went back to school at the Lincoln County Adult Education Center and graduated. New doors have opened for me. The most important thing is I can support my kids and feel better about myself.

If you do not have your diploma or GED [credential], please go back to school. Believe me, you will feel much better about yourself. They want you to graduate just as badly as you want to graduate. And they will help you, just ask.

Thank you to all the teachers and my family, especially Grandpa Benny.

Find the Adult Education Center in your area by visiting

<http://dwe.arkansas.gov/AdultEd/adulteducationcenters.html>.

CONFERENCES

To keep abreast of the most current national trends and issues in the arena of Adult Education, representatives from the state office and local programs in Arkansas attended several conferences and national meetings during the month.

- Brinda Berry, Nancy Loftis, Marsha Taylor and Ruth Ann Williams attended the 18th Annual National Conference on Family Literacy in Orlando, Florida from March 1-3. Session topics included training for adult and early childhood educators, English as a Second Language, parental involvement, and challenging the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy.



Above: Ruth Ann Williams, Marsha Taylor & Nancy Loftis.
Inset: Brinda Berry with Henry Winkler.

- From March 17-19, Dr. Philip Less represented the state office by attending the National Meeting for Adult Education State Directors in Washington D.C. The three days of meetings focused on several key issues adult education faces: the federal funding formula, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, transitioning adults and English language learners to employment and postsecondary education, monitoring, the American Community Survey, developing career pathways, and writing policies and guidelines. There was considerable time to share ideas with other state office directors and staff. On the last day, the southern area supervisor led a regional meeting for the 13 southern states represented.
- Dr. Philip Less attended the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Conference from March 25-28. This international conference for English as a Second Language teachers was held in Denver, Colorado.

Visit <http://dwe.arkansas.gov/adult.html> for previous issues of the *Adult Education Newsletter*.

Student Spotlight

Fernando Lopez is enrolled in English as a Second Language classes and Adult Education classes at Arkansas Technical University – Ozark Campus (Franklin County).

Before moving to Arkansas from Mexico, Fernando was in seminary for two years. He is now working toward earning an *Arkansas High School Diploma* so that he can enroll in college. His ultimate educational goal is to earn a law degree.

When asked who influenced his decision to pursue a GED credential, Fernando named Fred Romo who serves as a member of the Franklin County Literacy Board of Directors and an ESL tutor for the council.

