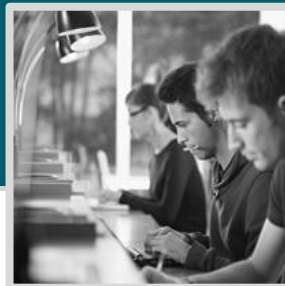


Narrative Analysis of AB86 Consortia Proposal Objectives 3, 5, 6, & 7

Prepared for the
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

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This report provides the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) an overview of approaches, strategies, and topics outlined by regional consortia regarding student transitions, student acceleration, staff professional development, and partner leveraging in relation to Assembly Bill 86. The trends identified in this report will assist CCCCCO in providing feedback to the consortia for revised proposals.

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INTRODUCTION

For the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the State of California has allocated \$25 million dollars to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). CCCCCO will distribute these funds to various educational consortia in the state, determinate upon need. Assembly Bill 86 (AB 86) "outlines expectations for consortium development as well as planning and implementation requirements to establish the Adult Education Consortium Program. The intent of AB 86 is to expand and improve the provision of adult education –via these consortia– with incremental investments starting with the 2015-16 fiscal year."¹

As a necessary step in the AB86 grant process, CCCCCO requested that California consortia submit interim reports detailing gaps, barriers, and strategies present in their current provision of education to adult students. The CCCCCO will then be able to address inherent commonalities described in the proposals.

In preparation for the second review phase of the AB86 proposal development process, Hanover assessed the content of Objectives 3, 5, 6, and 7 in each of the draft reports and their companion tables. A spreadsheet accompanying this summary document details categorical trends observed in relation to each of the four Objectives noted above. Note that not all consortia had complete responses to these Objectives; in particular, consortia addressed Objectives 6 and 7 less frequently.

KEY FINDINGS

- **For Objective 3, consortia's proposed strategies and approaches often revolve around instructional methods, assessment and provision, partner integration into the educational process, and finding ways to augment student support services, such as childcare.** Proposals addressing instruction are most numerous, including approaches to create new classes linked to student goals and ability levels, offering contextualized instruction, and creating aligned and easy-to-understand curricula.
- **Proposals for Objective 5 cover a wide range of efforts, including addressing staff needs, revamping programs and services, introducing new classes, and increasing the focus on career connections.** Consortia again address contextual learning under this Objective, along with considerations on increasing human resources, engaging with students (particularly for counseling), creating bridge programs, and focusing on class delivery locations and formats.
- **Responses to Objective 6, intended to focus on professional development, varied widely, with some consortia addressing means of development with others offering a topical assessment.** Consortia are considering and implementing traditional, in-person workshops and presentations as well as online/individually-focused professional development options. Development topics include a focusing

¹ "AB 86 Overview." California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. <http://ab86.cccco.edu/Overview.aspx>

on instruction for certain types of students, increasing cultural awareness, and developing technology, life, and career skills.

- **Consortia are intending to leverage partners in numerous ways by taking advantage both of their services and their infrastructure, according to proposals related to Objective 7.** Many consortia plan to use their partners' facilities to offer classes and other services. In addition, consortia hope to work with partners to market directly to students, and perhaps work together to offer student support services, like childcare, that may be too expensive or impractical for consortia to offer directly.

FINDINGS

Hanover reviewed the consortia's interim report documents and noted numerous commonly-cited strategies and approaches for increasing the quality, effectiveness, and reach of educational services for adult students. The accompanying spreadsheet details particular items specified by individual consortia in their reports, classified according to the corresponding AB86 Objectives.

As the consortia used varying vocabularies and methods for indicating their plans, Hanover engaged in a qualitative review to generate the categories specified on the spreadsheet. Through this method, Hanover identified certain trends in the consortia's approaches and documented them for this report in the form of a narrative analysis.

OBJECTIVE 3:

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

The most common goals noted in consortia proposals include the creation of more standardized intake and placement processes and the development of aligned curricula. Beyond these objectives, numerous consortia also propose streamlining students' transitions by using instructional or academic strategies such as articulation agreements, contextualized instruction, bridge courses, or credential and curriculum mapping. Less-frequently proposed strategies include providing online instruction and formal industry certifications.

The advantage of a standardized intake or placement process is that it facilitates transitions between partners at different educational levels. As the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC) notes, "a common assessment [can] determine whether or not an adult education student is ready to transition to community college."

Accordingly, the majority of proposals lean towards using a standardized or uniform process across all consortium partners. The Lake Tahoe Adult Education Consortium, for example, suggests that "agreement on a single assessment process (e.g. ACT's 'work keys') offered in both East and West Slope communities will facilitate better access and appropriate placement of individuals with diverse needs." Similarly, the Imperial County Adult Education Consortium reports that dialogues among partner faculty revealed discrepancies in assessment methods; thus, "a low-intermediate class at an adult education school may not be the same [as a] low-intermediate class at the community college." Imperial County, like a number of other consortia, is considering the use of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) to assess students "for placement in appropriate adult education courses throughout Imperial County adult education schools and at the community college."

Some consortia recognize the need to assess factors beyond a student's academic skills. CAERC, for instance, proposes "defining and aligning academic standards, assessment instruments, and data collection systems," but suggests that this will require the development of "multiple measurement criteria" for placing students, including those related to support service needs. This process would ultimately "ascertain the student's career and advancement interests or goals to help guide him or her along the correct pathway through programs."

Relatedly, a number of consortia address the need for consortium-wide progress indicators to assist students with marking their movement through the system. The Sonoma County Community College District, for instance, proposes to "work to qualify and quantify key milestones in each pathway that upon completion indicate that a student is on track to finish their identified program."

The second most commonly cited strategy for facilitating students' seamless educational transitions is the use of standardized or aligned curricula. Some consortia view this as a matter of conforming one existing curriculum to another; thus, the Rancho Santiago Adult Education Consortium proposes to create an "evidence-based high school curriculum that is aligned to college entry classes and career readiness."

Other consortia, however, propose to create new curricula that will align across levels. The Antelope Valley AB86 Consortium members propose to "work collaboratively to design and utilize compatible, stackable, industry-vetted and standards-based curriculum and credentials for adults who continue through the pathway from the K-12 district to community college (and university) level courses." This will include both articulation of coursework and "alignment of exit and entrance assessments." The consortium has already identified a number of areas such as nursing assistant, advanced welding, or automotive technician, which will require curricula development.

Not all consortia propose to develop aligned curricula, possibly because of the difficulties of reconciling the requirements of various external bodies. In considering high school equivalency work for adult students, the San Luis Obispo County AB 86 Regional Consortium notes that "curricula cannot be aligned due to the reality of Board-adopted materials for high school students." Despite this hurdle, however, the consortium reports that "consortium members are informing each other of their current curricula to share successes and strategies."

Contextualized instruction, in which career or college content receives integration into basic skills instruction in order to prepare students for more advanced education, appears in a number of consortia proposals. San Diego Adult Education Regional Consortium proposes to "develop contextualized curriculum within a career cluster structure that [has a] bridge into postsecondary education." The I-BEST model, developed in Washington state, receives mention in a number of proposals.

Bridge or transition courses also appear with moderate frequency in the proposals. As described by the North Santa Clara County Student Transition Consortium, bridge courses “provide additional academic support to students to gain academic knowledge and skills that are needed for college readiness or to prepare for vocational training. Bridge courses are offered concurrently to the academic courses in which adult learners are already enrolled.”

Curriculum or credential mapping represents a strategy in which institutions develop graphics to assist students, advisers, or other stakeholders with planning. This strategy received a few mentions in the proposals review. The Sequoias Adult Education Consortium elaborated on the idea, noting a desire to develop, “a mapping tool that lays out career pathways in the five program areas and across program areas. This tool intends to consortium planning as well as to assist “potential students, current students, and staff.”

INTEGRATION OF PARTNERS

Most proposals include a number of strategies to coordinate partners’ activities. Specifically, most consortia propose to coordinate or integrate data systems to facilitate the collection and sharing of student data across different partner organizations. In some cases, consortia propose simply to integrate existing databases; the Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium, for example, proposes to “develop a mutually shared understanding of various data platforms and identify opportunities for coordination and sharing to support seamless student transition success.” Mt. San Antonio College Regional Consortium for Adult Education, on the other hand, proposes to “develop a common database that will act as a uniform means of obtaining student data across member programs,” and consortium members plan to form a task force for developing such a database. The consortium has already identified key issues in such a project, including student privacy, relevant data fields to include, and how to streamline data entry.

More generally, many consortia propose various ways to facilitate communication between partners. Often, this includes the formation of committees or advisory groups meeting regularly to share information. Citrus College District Consortium, suggests that “the best way to administer the alignment of current programs with the goals of postsecondary education and/or career pathways is to create a CCDC Steering Committee,” which will “foster communication between CCDC members, workforce agencies and consortium partners; oversee the ongoing alignment of placement, curriculum, and assessment across all programs; and evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of all programs.” Other proposals are less comprehensive; State Center AB86 Adult Education Consortium, for instance, simply proposes to “include adult school representative[s] in college counseling division meetings,” which would at least serve to “[disseminate] information to the adult school (deadlines, program updates, etc.).”

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Almost all proposals include mention of some type of enhancement to student support services among consortium members. Typically, consortia plan to focus on providing career or college counseling (to help students define their goals) or providing individual instructional support (to assist students struggling with academic skills). Antelope Valley AB86 Consortium members, for example, propose to:

...collaborate on designing a multi-tiered system of student supports, including, but not limited to, career assessments and interest/aptitude surveys, educational guidance/counseling services, language fluency supports (including bilingual classroom aides), individual education and guidance plans, workplace readiness skills classes and field trips, assistance with EDD/CalJOBS systems, CalWorks or other financial assistance, etc.

Numerous consortia also intend to focus on support services that help students with life situations that impede their learning, such as by providing childcare or transportation. San Diego North Adult Education Partnership (Palomar), for example, recognizes that “many of our adult learners do not have the finances for babysitting or the family structure to obtain help from family members,” which is “often a reason for ‘spotty’ attendance and drop out.” Similarly, San Mateo County AB86 Consortium proposes to “provide coordinated transportation support including information on timing and locations of transit pickup” and to “participate on public transportation advisory boards to advocate and stay informed.”

In many cases, consortia propose increasing staffing to address the provision of student support services. Mt. San Antonio College Regional Consortium for Adult Education seeks to establish, “at least two counseling positions . . . to work with students in managing successful transition to consortium programs.” Similarly, the Sonoma County Community College District, “identified the need for [adult education] system navigators (also called cultural liaisons in the ESL programs) that would serve students across both secondary and community college systems.”

A few consortia make mention of providing student support services online or through other technologies. Rancho Santiago Adult Education Consortium proposes to, “implement teleconferencing with counselors for off-site students (i.e.: FaceTime via mobile phone or iPad),” and to, “create educational and informative videos and online orientation programs that will help give students access to counseling information and services.”

OBJECTIVE 5:

STAFF TRENDS

Many of the consortia initiatives deal with changes to faculty and staff, whether hiring additional teachers and teaching aides, increasing professional development opportunities, or hiring more counselors, navigators, and other student specialists. Allan Hancock College Consortium notes that, “increased staffing - faculty and teachers, counselors/navigators, and instructional assistants – [is] a critical cross-area solution for many of the issues holding back learners.” Increased professional development opportunities benefit all teachers and staff and thus improve student success. Examples of specific types of professional development receive further analysis in the Objective 6 subsection of this report.

College and career vocational counselors also help students to identify and take advantage of more opportunities regardless of whether they intend to continue with further education or enter the workforce. Several consortia recommend counselors work more closely with students to develop individualized study and career plans. Counselors and staff would, “assess each student’s goals to understand how they define their (academic/career) success and devise a plan to help them achieve their goals,” as per the Glendale Community College District proposal.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Bridge programs are an extremely popular proposal among consortia. Many advocate some form of dual-enrollment or GED-to-higher-education program that would better prepare high-school-level students for college. This includes offering bridge ESL programs. The Mid-Alameda County Consortium advocates for better communication “regarding dual-enrollment processes (how to sign up, waivers, etc.)... [and to] develop a liaison role to provide coordination assistance.”

One-on-one tutoring from professors or fellow students, as well as peer mentoring, receives mention by some consortia as initiatives that could lead to student success. Other consortia hope to use placement examinations to effectively assign students to classes or remedial help, as needed. Some proposals mention child care and other services that would make attending class easier for students in logistical terms; however, funding constraints often makes providing these services difficult.

A few consortia propose the development of common regional curriculum and data standards for collection and formatting in order to easily share and integrate program information. The Santa Cruz County Adult Education Consortium proposes developing “state or regionally supported repositories of curriculum supported by technology that members can obtain easily, [and] staff development that allows for faculty to review, articulate, and update curriculum with community partners.” Similar information regarding sharing methods also received mention in relation to professional development (see Objective 6).

NEW CLASSES

Proposals for new class formats of varying kinds are very common among consortia. In terms of class content, the intention to focus on contextual learning appears regularly. Also known as combined classes, these courses pair a traditional academic subject with career-focused technical training; for example, the Los Angeles Regional Adult Education Consortium suggests, “combining math studies for welding with welding technical and lab classes.” Contextual learning classes of this nature are likely most useful for students interested in vocational training and apprenticeships.

Regarding class delivery formats, the creation of online or hybrid classes (also known as blended learning classes) received frequent mention in the consortia proposals. Online and distance learning courses increase student flexibility and access to classes during non-traditional times. In the same vein, many proposals suggest that by conducting more classes over the summer, or creating flexible scheduling systems, working adults will have greater access to educational opportunities. Some consortia, including Butte Glenn, Los Angeles, and Merced, suggest “co-located” classes, i.e., offerings in local community institutions or satellite locations, to increase student access. Others propose teaching students in cohorts for more effective learning through increased peer collaboration and motivation.

Some consortia suggest differentiating classes by student progress and ability. Accelerated courses that move more quickly can target advanced learners, in subject areas such as ESL. Similarly, slower-paced courses can focus on students needing additional help. The North Coast Adult Education Consortium suggests the creation of non-credit versions of certain classes for first-year students in need of a slower pace, noting that such classes do not have a negative effect on financial aid and expected time to graduation.

CAREER FOCUS

Increasing links to vocations and careers is another area of commonality among consortia. Many consortia, including Antelope Valley, Glendale, and Merced, suggest adding vocational and career training to ESL programs. North Orange County Community College Consortium includes a proposal for a mandatory Academic and Career Preparation course that would give students the “employability skills needed to be competitive in the workforce...[including] various topics, such as resume writing, filling out job applications, [and] interviewing techniques.” Other consortia simply propose providing additional apprenticeship or internship opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 6:

MODE OF DELIVERY

In Objective 6, most consortia discuss methods for providing professional development for teachers and staff. Conferences and workshops of varying frequency are by far the most common method indicated. A smaller, but still substantial, number propose online webinars or self-directed online learning opportunities. Outside coaches and speakers, employer outreach, peer coaching and mentoring, and new teacher orientations are also popular suggestions.

Some districts stress the lack of funding for professional development as a major problem. A few consortia are taking steps to secure increased funding. “Faculty must be able to attend professional development programs outside of their classroom hours, and all staff must be compensated for their time” if professional development is to be truly viable, according to the South Bay Adult Education Consortium, El Camino.

SPECIALIZED TEACHING METHODS

Several consortia mention holding workshops or involving outside experts to train teachers specifically in the instruction of disabled adults (e.g., training in how to effectively educate adults on the autism spectrum). Other proposals deal with specific “special populations.” For example, Lassen County suggests holding a skills workshop that would help teachers to better acclimate immigrants needing ESL services to the adult education system and the Santa Monica Regional Consortium proposes specialized training in serving veteran students. The Merced Regional Adult Education Consortium additionally suggests targeting “foster youth, prisoners, [and] mental health clients,” for specialized teacher professional development.

TEACHING RELEVANT SKILLS

Many professional development suggestions focus on training teachers to effectively impart relevant skills to students. Consortia frequently identified technology as of the most important facets of education, especially regarding access and comfort. “Adult learners often have less exposure to and experience with technology,” when compared to traditional college students, according to the Sonoma County Community College District’s report. Other important training categories include college readiness, and career or workforce skills. As suggested by the Antelope Valley AB86 Consortium, college preparatory skills include:

- Core subjects and 21st century themes (such as language arts, mathematics, science, global awareness, and financial literacy).
- Learning and innovation skills (such as creativity and innovation and critical thinking and problem solving).
- Information, media, and technology skills.
- Life and career skills (such as initiative and self-direction).

OBJECTIVE 7:

PROGRAM RESOURCES

The most common way in which consortia plan to leverage existing relationships is by using facilities or program space. By coordinating with partners, consortia hope to market services, or receive assistance referring students to programs. Allan Hancock, for instance, provides a typical example—the consortium proposes to make use of the local public library by “inventory[ing] space available, formaliz[ing] use of [the] venue with [a] Memo of Understanding, [and] schedul[ing] classes in [the] venue.” Similarly, many proposals note that partners, such as libraries, can help to disseminate information about programs and refer students to adult education opportunities.

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

Another common theme in consortia proposals is a call for improved communication with external partners, often through committees or advisory groups. Thus, the State Center AB86 Adult Education Consortium proposes to “develop regional CTE and Apprenticeship Advisory Committees within the State Center Adult Education region.” In addition to the consortium partners, the committee will include the “local chamber of commerce, workforce programs, adult school students, local employer providers, mental health [services], adult[s] with disabilities, apprenticeship programs, [and] naturalization/citizenship agencies.”

One variant of this theme that occurs in numerous proposals is the call for external partners, often employer or industry groups, to provide input on programming. The Salinas Valley AB86 Consortium, for example, proposes to hold meetings of community and industry advisory committees. These meetings should, “engage local stakeholders to provide input for our programs [thus] ensuring rigor.”

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Many consortia proposals cite using existing resources to provide various forms of support to students. The Rancho Santiago Adult Education Consortium notes that the local school district, and Boys and Girls Club facilities, could provide childcare while adult students attend classes. More ambitiously, the North Orange County Community College Consortium proposes to develop a mentoring program for adult students that would “leverage existing regional assets such as local universities and alumni programs.” These external partners could provide mentors for students in specific academic fields, such as reading, math, citizenship, English, computer skills, and critical thinking.

A common variant on this theme is the proposal to leverage external partners to create more opportunities, such as internships or apprenticeships, for students. The Pasadena Area Consortium, suggests that “existing community partnerships will be leveraged and new partnerships will be established with local community organizations and business entities to

support the development of internship opportunities.” Similarly, the Mt. San Antonio College Regional Consortium for Adult Education proposes to work with professional associations and similar groups to develop “innovative instructional formats” using “facilities and/or resources from a local business in the student’s field to promote opportunities to gain hand-on experience in that industry.”

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