

Volume 13

Number 4

# FIELD NOTES

by and for the Massachusetts  
Adult Education Community

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spring 2004

## Adult Secondary Education

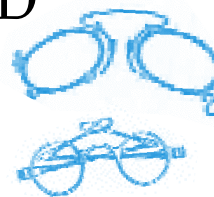
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System for Adult Basic Education Support

Funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education

## Visualizing GED Through a Personal Lens



BY SANDY LITTLE

We know that the GED demands a lot of our students; however, a closer look at the thinking behind these demands will help us better prepare our students for the five-test battery. The demands within the math and writing sections of the GED belong to a category called "procedural knowledge," meaning the content can be rapidly acquired despite lack of prior knowledge or experience.

In contrast, social studies, science, and reading test material falls into the very different category of "declarative knowledge," where one must have years of reading experience to successfully handle the content. Because most GED programs enroll students for months rather than years, declarative knowledge must be approached through creating lessons where material is made immediately relevant, thus encouraging confidence and familiarity with test content.

What this means for the classroom is that we, as teachers, need to find ways to help bring students closer to the material. Since our students need to know both the meaning of something, such as plate tectonics, for example, as well as be familiar with it as a concept, I have been planning my lessons by allowing my students to make personal connections to science and social studies. With regard to plate tectonics specifically, I begin by asking my students to briefly write their thoughts about experiencing an earthquake or a nearby volcanic explosion. After we've begun thinking and talking about having lost

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# F O R E W O R D

*Researching this issue of Field Notes clarified, for me, the range of options adult and out-of-school-youth have for obtaining a high school credential in Massachusetts. I now have a better understanding of the differences and similarities among External Diploma Programs (EDP), Adult Diploma Programs (ADP), General Education Diploma (GED), and evening high schools. I hope the collections of articles here offers a clear understanding of these programs to readers, as well.*

*Further, my understanding of Massachusetts Education Reform, especially how it affects adults seeking a high school credential, has deepened as a result of putting this issue together. As we know, ed reform in Massachusetts has superseded local decision making and evaluation in K-12 schools with state-mandated high-stakes standardized testing, number of hours in class, and other policies. Because adult diploma programs are linked to the public schools that issue the diplomas, they, too, are subject to the policies of Mass. ed reform. For a fuller picture of these issues, please see the article on page 9.*

*In another policy arena, Tom Mechem from the Massachusetts Department of Education clarifies the "one-year rule" on retesting for GED and updates us on what's happening as this rule is reconsidered. From a classroom perspective, Sandy Little explores the concept of "declarative knowledge" in teaching GED, and offers creative possibilities for building students' scaffold of prior knowledge to increase their chances of success in the reading section of the test. Sandy also offers practical test-taking tips for students. Karin Chao interviews Stephen Hanley about the the EDP program at WAITT House, and students who successfully completed the ADP program at Cambridge Community Learning Center gave permission to publish their ADP essays.*

*Even if our current students aren't ready to go for a high school credential, we'd all do well to understand the big picture of adult basic education, one that includes this giant step. Our level 1 ESOL students today may be our EDP candidates in a few years. The more we know, the better we can counsel students about choices down the path.*

## **Field Notes Mission Statement and Editorial Policy**

### **Mission**

*Field Notes* is an adult basic education (ABE) quarterly, theme-based newsletter. It is designed to share innovative and reliable practices, resources, and information relating to ABE. We attempt to publish a range of voices about important educational issues, and we are especially interested in publishing new writers, writers of color, and writers who represent the full range of diversity of learners and practitioners in the field.

*Field Notes* is also a place to provide support and encouragement to new and experienced practitioners (ABE, ESOL, GED, ADP, Family Literacy, Correction, Workplace Education, and others) in the process of writing about their ideas and practice. Editorial support is always provided to any writer who requests it. Teachers, administrators, counselors, volunteers, and support staff are welcome to write for *Field Notes*.

### **Our Funder**

*Field Notes* is published by the System for Adult Basic Educational Support (SABES) and funded by Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), Massachusetts Department of Education. The Central Resource Center (CRC) of SABES is located at 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210.

### **Our Editorial Policy**

Unsolicited manuscripts to *Field Notes* are welcome. If you have an idea for an article or wish to submit a letter to the editor, contact Lenore Balliro, editor, by phone at 617-482-9485, by email at <lballiro2000@yahoo.com>, or by mail at 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Submission deadlines for upcoming issues are published in each issue of *Field Notes*.

Opinions expressed in *Field Notes* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editor, SABES, or its funders. We do reserve the right to decline publication. We will not publish material that is sexist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory.

### **Our Reprint Policy**

Articles published in *Field Notes* may be reprinted in any publication as long as they are credited to the author and *Field Notes*.

### **Field Notes Advisory Board**

Lenore Cardoza, Karin Chao, Bruce Dahlquist, Maria Kefallinou, Sandra Little

Editor: Lenore Balliro  
Layout: Heather Brack  
Proofreading: Deb Liehs

# New GED Policies and the One-Year Rule

By TOM MECHEM

In the months leading up to the new series of GED tests on January 1, 2001, the GED office of the Massachusetts Department of Education reexamined certain policies concerning GED testing in Massachusetts. This reexamination led to policy changes. The most important of these changes has come to be known as the "one-year rule." This article will clarify the rationale for the one-year rule and explore responses to this policy from the ABE field at large.

Previous to 2001, a GED test-taker had five years to complete and pass the GED tests. The GED office decided that such a long time span compromised the integrity of the testing process. Further, policies governing the retaking of GED tests were unwieldy, and in some cases, unenforceable.

The GED office wanted to improve the entire testing process. Before writing new policies, however, they took a few preliminary steps. They researched GED policies and practices in other states. They also developed the following criteria for establishing new testing policies:

1. The policy preserves the integrity of the test and the testing process
2. The policy is fair to the testers (test-takers)
3. The tests can be implemented by the test centers and the Oklahoma Scoring Service, who scores all Massachusetts GED tests, without too much hardship.

## One-Year Rule

Currently, a GED test-taker is allowed one year from the time of her first test to complete and pass the five-test battery. There is a two-retest maximum within a calendar year. Thus was born the "one-year rule," a policy that the GED office feels allows a dedicated and well-prepared test-taker ample time and opportunity to succeed. This rule was approved by the Commissioner of education.



## Strong Response From the ABE Field

About one nanosecond after the one-year rule was publicized, many GED teachers and program directors responded strongly. They argued that a one-year limit is unfair to test-takers. In order to investigate and respond to criticisms, the GED office formed a committee (something we do very well) to examine the impact of the one-year rule and to determine whether it should be modified.

The committee, whose membership reflects teachers and directors in community-based organizations, corrections, and community colleges well as Department of Education staff (myself included) is

chaired by Cynthia Therrien, GED chief examiner at Northern Essex Community College. The committee soon realized that most of the evidence used to support criticisms of the one-year rule is anecdotal.

To obtain a fuller picture of exactly who passes and fails GED tests in one year, I examined the testing records of each person whose scores were "sunsetting" (that is, made automatically invalid after one year) for the first six months of the new policy.

## Results

- ◆ 74% of the testers passed the tests, compared to an average of 71% for the three years preceding the implementation of the one-year rule.

Possible conclusion: The one-year rule is not causing a huge number of additional testers to fail.

- ◆ Of the non-passers, 21% took fewer than five tests and another 40% took five tests only.

Possible conclusion: A significant majority of the non-passers are not taking full advantage of even the one year allotted them.

For my next trick, I divided the non-passers into three extremely arbitrary categories:

- ◆ Sure Things: Those test-takers who should pass relatively easily;
- ◆ On the Cusps: Those test-takers who have a solid chance of passing with good instruction;
- ◆ Long Rows to Hoe: Those test-takers who have a lot of time and work ahead of them before they are ready to pass the tests.

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**New GED Policies...**

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**One result:**

- ◆ Of the Sure Things and On the Cusps, 51% did not pass because they failed math only. Possible conclusion: GED math instruction should be expanded and improved.

**Broader Results**

The committee's inquiry has expanded to include a broader examination of GED policies with the goal of maximizing the number of GED test-takers who pass the GED tests. The one-year rule is only one factor in this examination. The committee will continue to analyze data from the first full year of the implementation of the one-year rule.

The one-year rule will remain in effect through 2004. Any possible modifications will go into effect in January 2005.

**Data Available**

Anyone interested in expanded and updated statistics on one-year rule test-takers (non-passers), please email me and I will make them available. Further, I am available to receive and respond to any comments, criticisms, diatribes, and advice.

*Tom Mechem is the GED state chief examiner at the Massachusetts Department of Education where he oversees the operations of the 33 official GED testing centers in Massachusetts. A lifelong teacher, Tom spent his pre-DOE years teaching and coordinating GED preparation at various agencies in the Boston area. He can be reached at by email at <rmechem@doe.mass.edu> or by phone at 781-338-6621.*

**Visualizing GED...**

*Continued from page 1*

many possessions or loved ones or about the destruction caused to neighborhoods, businesses, and schools, we read an excerpt from Jack London's "Story of an Eyewitness," about the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Once we have linked science to real life, we

approach is to first invite the students' attention through a personal link and then to make one's lessons as much skill-based as content-based. So, while it's important to know that air pollution causes health problems, it's also important to gain familiarity with cause-and-effect relationships.

This is not to suggest that we should run to printed material and

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*After I witnessed one of my students giving her 10-month-old daughter a bottle of Pepsi, I developed a series of lesson plans on nutrition that began with research-based readings and open discussions, leading us into critical questions, essential skill building, and GED test-related vocabulary and content.*

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move into what causes earthquakes, thus introducing vocabulary through conversation. Visualization through a personal lens is vital to learning and is essential for retention of material. Once there is a personal or human dimension to any topic, the content becomes more accessible and will be more rapidly acquired.

**Making a Personal Link**

The American Council on Education states that 50 percent of the new science GED test is conceptual understanding and 50 percent is problem solving. Because the scope of the science material is so vast, I find the most effective

photocopy sections on cause-and-effect. Inundating students with hundreds of examples of cause-and-effect won't help as much as a handful of meaningful conversations surrounding relevant cause-and-effect relationships. After I witnessed one of my students giving her 10-month-old daughter a bottle of Pepsi, I developed a series of lesson plans on nutrition that began with research-based readings and open discussions, leading us into critical questions, essential skill building, and GED test-related vocabulary and content. The second piece to this strategy is to make sure that the conversation is revisited so

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## Visualizing GED...

*Continued from page 4*

that the words and concepts introduced there find real purpose and become familiar to the students. This same approach can be utilized in social studies. Primary sources offer a perfect springboard into helping students view economics, civics, historical events, and even government with a human and personal dimension. Again, the scope of the material on this test is intimidating, so it's unlikely that we can cover all 50 questions. However, through holding organized and purposeful discussions with our students, we can cover more material than if we held a series of short information-based lessons. Furthermore, a meaningful discussion does more than just cover material—it includes our students in a manner that truly engages them.

For example, when teaching the Great Depression, I open my lesson with photos and personal accounts from that period. I then ask my students to imagine where the photos

are from and what happened to these people. In order to ensure that the economic and political concepts embedded within this topic are covered, I have a "discussion map," which I use to remind myself what essential words and ideas should be written on the board in an organized fashion.



There are many topics that lend themselves to this type of teaching where we can pull in a variety of vocabulary and ideas that students will need in order to manage the test material successfully.

The "usual suspects" of GED questions (main idea, fact versus opinion, restating information, making inferences, and cause-and-effect) are still lurking in these tests, but the demand of applying a

given idea in a new context is looming larger than ever on both tests. We see this manifested on the practice tests by the increase in single-item questions in which students are given a brief explanation of something (such as ultraviolet radiation or supply and demand) and then asked to choose the answer that best applies to that concept. Questions that require students to apply declarative knowledge tend to be some of the hardest for our students, but if this skill is learned in the company and safety of other learners and practiced over a few months' time, it will become easier.

A lack of declarative knowledge hurts our students, but we can fill this gap through having relevant, organized, and meaningful discussions that offer the content necessary to pass these tests.

*Sandy Little teaches 16–21 year olds from Roxbury and Dorchester at ESAC (Ensuring Stability through Action in the Community). She plans to enter a PhD program next year. She can be reached at <s.j.little@att.net>.*

## Upcoming Issues of *Field Notes*

### Summer 2004

The summer issue of *Field Notes*, an abbreviated version of our regular-sized issues, will be available exclusively online. We are saving on printing and production costs so we can have a longer, fuller, richer issue in the fall.

To read the the summer issue online in June, go to <[www.sabes.org](http://www.sabes.org)> and click on "*Field Notes*."

### Fall 2004—Writing in Adult Basic Education

This expanded issue of *Field Notes* will focus on writing instruction in ABE /ESOL programs and will highlight some of the experiences of the statewide SABES writing theme initiative. Any ABE/ESOL practitioner with something to say about writing instruction is welcome to submit. We welcome lesson plans, practical ideas for teaching writing, and reflective articles.

**Call by May 15.**

**Submit by June 15.**



# GED Test-Taking Tips: Advice to Students

BY SANDY LITTLE

**B**ased on my experiences, these tips help students succeed on the GED test.

## Writing—Grammar

### Ahead of time

- ◆ Study rules for grammar mechanics—commas, capitalization, spelling and apostrophes.
- ◆ When you're reading the newspaper or a magazine, make a note of how punctuation, parallel structure, and subject-verb agreement work in real life.

### During the test

When restructuring sentences, make them as smooth as possible and be sure your new choice conveys the same idea as the original. Answer choices that make you move a lot of words around or insert more than one or two new words are not usually correct. The correct answer is the simplest, smoothest restatement of the original sentence.

## Writing—Essay

In addition to all the usual rubric requirements, let the details really bring your writing alive! Make an effort to engage your readers. Pull them into your writing with a human connection. This is the only part of your test that's not graded by a machine, so reach out to the human on the other end!

## Social Studies and Science

- ◆ You don't have to know every word in the passage to understand the material. Many questions can be answered through

understanding the general idea of what is being said.

- ◆ The correct answer choice will always have something to do with what you read. Do not be distracted by choices that do too much interpreting or answer choices that introduce entirely new language from what is in the passage.
- ◆ Avoid answer choices that are in the extremes (i.e., something would "never work," or "always work," graphs that are "not practical...").
- ◆ When looking at a graph or table, be sure to read the title. It will help you to interpret the information.

## Math

- ◆ Don't let the math questions intimidate you. The information you need to solve them is there, you just need to start somewhere with the numbers. Try each one.
- ◆ Read carefully! Many people get questions wrong on practice tests because they did not read the problem closely enough.
- ◆ Pay attention to language (e.g., "how many more than," "total," "to the nearest inch"). These words are on the test to help you!
- ◆ Keep your scrap paper organized and write big. If you decide to skip a problem, you'll want to be able to find your original thoughts on it.
- ◆ Be familiar with the calculator. Know the square root and fraction keys!

## Reading

- ◆ Read the titles of the passages. The test-makers wrote these to help you understand the theme of the reading.
- ◆ Glance at the questions first so you have some idea of what to keep an eye out for as you read.
- ◆ If you read the passage slowly and carefully the first time, you will waste less time looking for answers.
- ◆ Use your imagination. While you're reading, try to visualize the scene or images in your mind. This will help you to remember details and interactions between characters.

## Taking Care of You for the Test

- ◆ Get a good night's sleep the night before, and eat before you go. You can bring a drink in to the testing room with you.
- ◆ Relax and pace yourself. Keep an eye on the clock, but don't obsess over it.
- ◆ Mark each answer choice even if you have to guess. You will be automatically marked wrong if you leave it blank, so take a guess.
- ◆ Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.
- ◆ Before you start, take a deep breath and stretch. Then summon your confidence. Remind yourself that you're ready, you're strong, and can do it!

*Sandy Little teaches 16-21-year-old youth from Roxbury and Dorchester at ESAC (Ensuring Stability through Action in the Community). She can be reached at <s.j.little at att.net>.*

# External Diploma Program at WAITT House: An Interview with Stephen Hanley

BY KARIN CHAO

**W**AITT House (We're All In This Together) was established in 1979 by the Sisters of Charity, a group of educators who have been working in Roxbury for over 110 years. The Sisters, along with community residents, established WAITT House as a nonsecular, nonprofit, community-based organization whose mission reflects community services, adult literacy, and economic empowerment in Roxbury-North Dorchester neighborhoods.

As coordinator of Literacy Services at the Boston Public Library, I have worked with Stephen Hanley, executive director of WAITT House, for the last two years through the Roxbury Adult Literacy Coalition (RALC). I have also worked with many of WAITT House's External Diploma Program (EDP) students as they used library resources and attended our workshops and tutoring program. I recently sat down with Stephen and learned much more about WAITT House's EDP program, its students and their accomplishments.

## History

### What is an External Diploma Program (EDP)?

EDP is a collaborative program of WAITT House and the Boston Public Schools (BPS). WAITT House has been credentialed for the last twenty years to offer the EDP. In EDP, students must complete five units of study called tasks (subjects). Each EDP student is also required to prove competency in additional skills he or she devel-

oped through life or work experience. This competency, called the individual skill, can be demonstrated by an above average evaluation of job performance, a consistent record of volunteer work, successful completion of two college courses or job training program, or reporting on one's experience as a parent.

### What are the five tasks?

The five tasks are Community Resources, Consumer Awareness, Career Awareness, Health, and Government and Society. These tasks recognize adult experiences and concerns and they reflect the cultural variety of students.

### How do students get into the EDP program at WAITT House?

When a student successfully completes the highest level of the ABE program, passes the BPS diagnostic tests in reading, writing, and math, and successfully completes the preparatory exercise of pre-GED, the or she then qualifies for participation in EDP.

### What are some program goals of EDP?

Upon completion of the EDP, students will

1. Understand how to use community resources to meet the demands of daily living;
2. Know how to manage personal and family finances;
3. Develop knowledge about occupations and career planning techniques;
4. Understand the principles and

practices necessary to maintain good physical and mental health;

5. Understand the American governmental and social systems and how each system affects the lives of citizens;
6. Develop typing skills and know how to use basic word processing skills of the Windows program.

### What is the instructional approach of the EDP at WAITT House?

WAITT House allows students to work at their own pace while benefiting from the group experience of others in the EDP. The EDP teacher, Deborah Marquardt, conducts classes, and meets individually with each student on a regular basis to ensure that steady academic progress occurs. WAITT House also conducts writing classes to enable students to develop writing, critical thinking, research, and problem-solving skills. Students are also required to complete a computer literacy course.

### What does WAITT House do to encourage its students in their EDP work?

One important aspect in motivating students to continue their progress is through students sharing their knowledge and experiences with others. Our EDP students and graduates comprise an advisory committee, which counsels and encourages students and advises WAITT House administration on various needs of students. Also, through our collaboration

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**External Diploma Program...**

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with local institutions, students conduct field trips to museums, the state house, city hall, Symphony Hall, public hearings, libraries, and cultural events. We have also received grants that allow students to become interns in the following areas: tutoring computer classes, developing clerical skills, conducting workshops, and acting as a liaison to community residents and groups in reference to adult basic education. Extensive counseling and outreach services provided by teachers and counselors support the student as they face challenges. The EDP program at WAITT House is a day program with enough flexibility to accommodate the students' needs.

**How many have graduated from the WAITT House EDP?**

WAITT House has now passed the four hundred mark in diploma graduates. Four hundred and six (406) WAITT House participants have graduated through Boston Public Schools' EDP, the highest number of graduates among adult literacy programs in Boston, and has maintained an average of 95 percent placement rate of its graduates into jobs, job skills training, or college. On the average, we serve 35 EDP students a year and 15-17 graduates. Much credit must be given to Deborah Marquardt for the success rate of EDP participants at WAITT House. Deborah has been the EDP assessor and writing teacher at WAITTHousesince1986.

*Karin Chao is the coordinator of Literacy Services at the Boston Public Library. She can be reached at <kchao@bpl.org>.*

# GED: A Look at Teaching Materials, Research Reports, and Economic Impact

BY BARBARA GARNER

Curious about the economic impact of the GED? Wonder whether what you have noticed over the years—that males struggle more with the writing test, females with the math—has been corroborated in research findings? Looking for ideas on how to convince your students that they should go on to postsecondary education after finishing their GEDs? The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) has teaching materials, research reports, and a whole issue of *Focus on Basics* devoted to the GED. Click on <[http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/teach/beyond\\_ged.pdf](http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/teach/beyond_ged.pdf)> for *Beyond the GED: Making Conscious Choices about the GED and Your Futures*, teaching materials that provide GED students with practice in graph and chart reading, analysis of data, reading, and writing, while they learn about the labor market, the role of higher education, and the economic impact of the GED. *Focus on Policy*, which provides information on the economic benefits of the GED, is at <[ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/fop/v1\\_1.pdf](http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/fop/v1_1.pdf)>. NCSALL researcher John Tyler's research reports, as well as summaries of the research, are available at <[ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/publication.html](http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/publication.html)> under NCSALL Reports and NCSALL Research Briefs. And, for articles covering similar information in other issues of *Focus on Basics*, go to <[ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/fob/ti\\_ged.htm](http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/fob/ti_ged.htm)>.

*Barbara Garner is a senior program officer at World Education and the editor of Focus on Basics. She can be reached at <[bgarner@worlded.org](mailto:bgarner@worlded.org)>.*

## The Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline

The Hotline is a statewide information and referral service. It serves adults who seek a basic education program, volunteers who want to tutor, and agencies seeking referrals for their clients.



**800-447-8844**



# Adult Secondary Education in Massachusetts: Options and Issues

BY LENORE BALLIRO

*Note: The author interviewed the following people for this article:*

*Bob Aimo (Community Learning Center, Cambridge); David Sterns, (Adult Learning Program, Jamaica Plain Community Center); Ruth Derfler (director of GED and Alternative High School Credentials, Adult and Community Learning Services, Massachusetts Department of Education).*

Mark dropped out of high school at 16 because of family problems, and he now wants to get his high school diploma. Phuong has been in this country for 15 years; now that her kids are in school, she wants to go back to school and get a diploma, too. And Jeannette wants to enter a community college with her oldest daughter to study child development, but without a high school credential she can't get in. What alternatives do adults and youth in Massachusetts have if they want to achieve a high school credential?

## The Choices

In Massachusetts, youth who have dropped out of high school and adults returning to school have several choices for completing high school education. According to Ruth Derfler, director of GED and Alternative Adult High School Credentials at the Massachusetts Department of Education/ Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), the more we know about these options, the better we can help students make appropriate choices consistent with their expe-

riences, abilities, and goals.

Options for adult secondary education include the General Education Development (GED), Evening High Schools, the Adult Diploma Program (ADP), and the External Diploma Program (EDP). Here's a summary of each.

## GED

The nationally recognized GED is perhaps the most well-known high school equivalency credential. The GED contains a series of five academic tests intended to measure what graduating high school seniors have achieved. These tests include: language arts, writing; social studies; science; language arts, reading; and mathematics. Recent high school graduates who want to get a credential quickly and whose skills level allows them to jump right into preparation for the tests often choose GED.

Students can prepare for the tests alone or enroll in a program where they get counseling, support, and curriculum that often surpasses test preparation. For more specific information on passing test scores, retake policies, cost, and so on, please see the web sites listed at the end of this article, and see Tom Mechem's article on page 3.

The GED is perhaps the most "portable" of all high school credentials. Accountability is not an issue with the GED; the GED Testing Service in Washington, D.C., is responsible for developing the tests, norming and validating the tests, and setting the minimum scoring requirements.

People who are still developing English as another language and adults who have been out of school for many years may not have the skills necessary to pass the GED tests, even if they enroll in a GED class. These students may choose or be referred to an ESOL or ABE class or a pre-GED class. Or, they may choose or be referred to an EDP or ADP program.

## Spanish GED

According to Derfler, "Commissioner of Education, Dr. David P. Driscoll, has determined that Spanish-language GED testing may continue in Massachusetts. Individuals who successfully complete and pass the Spanish-language GED test battery will receive a "Massachusetts High School Equivalency Certificate in Spanish." At this time, we hope to resume Spanish GED testing by July 1, 2004. The logistics and locations for Spanish GED testing are now being finalized. We will provide more detailed information by May 1, 2004."

## Evening High Schools

Another choice for recent high school dropouts (and others interested in classroom work) is an evening high school. About 15 cities and towns in Massachusetts (that the Department of Education is aware of) run these programs. According to Ruth Derfler at the ACLS, these programs cater to 16–18 year olds, though many welcome, and are populated by, much older

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# Fighting for My Children

BY JENNIFER FRANCIS

*Editor's Note: Jennifer Francis recently completed the Adult Diploma Program at the Community Learning Center (CLC) in Cambridge. She gave us permission to publish her essay, written as one of the program requirements. Thanks to Bob Aimo of the CLC for providing this essay from his student.*

As a mother I have learned to trust my instincts. My children have each brought different experiences and challenges to my life. First of all, I identified developmental delay in my first child, then I sought help. Second, I also had to advocate for my second child's health. He had asthma, and his pediatrician thought it was just a common cold. Reading during my pregnancies and as a parent helped me to diagnose my children's developmental delay and sickness. Today I am a proud mother.

During my first pregnancy, I read a lot about children's developmental stages. As a result, I was able to determine that my 13-month-old child, Daniel, who spoke seldom and used a very small vocabulary, had a speech delay. I consulted his pediatrician and brought my child's problem to her attention. She referred us to a speech therapist who tested his hearing and evaluated his speech. After a few follow-up appointments, we were referred to the Early Intervention Program when he was two. Early Intervention is a program that assists young children who are developmentally delayed or at risk of it. At this age he also displayed a behavior problem, which may have resulted from the speech delay and frustration at not being able to express himself. It could

also have been the "terrible" two stage.

The Early Intervention Program gave Daniel the opportunity to interact with other children his age. He learned to take turns and share toys with other children. During that same period of time he was offered home-based Early Childhood Program and speech therapy. The home-based program offers a once per week in-home visit, which lasts from one hour until the child is 5 years and 10 months. He received individual one-on-one service in my presence. He received educational toys and books each week. As a parent I learned a lot of valuable ideas. First of all I was able to deal better with Daniel's behavior problems and was taught a lot of activities to do with him to increase his vocabulary. Speech therapy services were also offered to Daniel in the therapist's office in a school, sometimes in my presence. During these sessions he continued to receive one-on-one service to improve his speech and behavior problems.

At age three Daniel no longer received the Early Intervention Program. At this time he still received the home-based program and speech therapy services. I then enrolled Daniel in a preschool to continue his speech and interaction with other children and to prepare for kindergarten. Daniel's behavior problems and speech delay have improved a lot. He is now in kindergarten and continues to receive service from a speech and language pathologist twice per week.

My second child, Matthew, brought medical experiences and

challenges to my life. At age 3 months he had his first cold with excessive vomiting, coughing, and high temperature. He continued to have frequent colds, and I became very concerned with his symptoms. At age 4 months I suggested to his pediatrician that he had asthma. The pediatrician insisted that it's normal for a child to have frequent colds. I was still uncomfortable with Matthew's symptoms. So I changed the pediatrician. He was immediately diagnosed with asthma. Matthew was sent home with a Nebulizer machine, albuterol, and Intel Comolyn medication.

During Matthew's asthma attacks he coughed and vomited excessively, which meant sleepless nights for us. To help him breathe better during attacks, I had to place him on my chest or place him in his car seat to sleep. As he got older he was able to sleep in his crib, with the mattress elevated. Matthew's asthma attacks have decreased, and I continue to give him the preventative medication. He is now much better and only occasionally gets an attack.

I will continue to fight for my children whenever needed.

*Jennifer Francis completed the Adult Diploma Program at the Cambridge Community Learning Center in 2003. She can be reached at <JEFrancis21@aol.com>.*

**Student Writing**



# My Job at Favorite Nurses

BY JOAN SMITH

*Editor's Note: Joan Smith recently completed the Adult Diploma Program at the Community Learning Center (CLC) in Cambridge. She gave us permission to publish her essay, written as one of the program requirements. Thanks to Bob Aimo of the CLC for providing this essay from his student.*

It is such a pleasure for me to work at Favorite Nurses. I have been working there as a home health aide for over nine years. The experiences and wonderful unique personalities made my job easier and more enjoyable. I also have learned an invaluable lesson, and that is never believe in everything that you hear. I used to hear from other home health aides about things such as racism and black aides being mistreated or disrespected. I have never encountered such a thing. I have always been treated fairly and kindly. I do believe it is up to you to make your clients feel safe and secure and for them to believe that you are capable of taking care of them.

I remember going on my first job assignment. My job was to take care of Mrs. J. It entailed bathing her, preparing her breakfast, feeding her, and doing light housekeeping. I was really shaky, because I had heard about so many bad experiences from other home health aides. I sat there waiting in the living room, and then her husband Mr. J came over and told me how to take care of his wife. After the day was over, we were so comfortable with each other that not only did I become her home health aide, but a great friend of the family. After taking care of her for six years, she passed away due to cancer. For

many years, I remained a friend of her husband, who was very nice to my children and me. He was a great listener and never judged me or the things I had to say. I had never known that Maine was so beautiful until he took the girls and me to Ogunquit Beach. He also took us to lunch. I remember once, people were staring at us, and I know it was because of our differences in race and age. Still with this kind of behavior, Mr. J was never afraid to be around us. On March 12 of last year, he had a horrific car accident. It was a very bad time for me because we loved him dearly.

My second job at Favorite Nurses was to take care of Mrs. S. Mrs. S's left leg had been amputated and she had survived a stroke. Her left side did not work at all, so her husband and I would have to do the things that she was incapable of doing. The S family was another great family. Mrs. S was very willing to do whatever it took to do things for herself. After a year passed, she one day said to me, "Joan, thank you for your encouraging, nurturing attitude." Mr. S had also said that he was very grateful that I had alleviated some of the pressure on him, that I was "meticulous" and that my "can do attitude" was welcoming. I never forgot those words. I still take those words of gratitude with me when working with my other clients. It meant so much to me to hear a client of mine say something so sweet and sincere. Although I don't work for them any longer, I still remain friends with them.

I am now working for Mrs. L. She has been diagnosed with MS (multiple sclerosis). The bottom half of her body is paralyzed and

sometimes her hands collapse. I have to bathe, dress, and feed her in the mornings. In the afternoon, I go grocery shopping or do other errands for her. At dinnertime, I sometimes cook her a Jamaican dish, which she really enjoys. In the evenings right before bed, I help with her exercise and wash her up again to get ready for bed. Mrs. L is a very flexible and considerate client. In December when my father passed away, to my surprise, she purchased my tickets for Jamaica, for which I am forever grateful.

Working for Favorite Nurses has changed my whole perspective on how to care for people. I also realize that individuals are different and that I have to adjust to meet their every need in order for us to get along. I have learned that common stereotypes are not always true. It is how you portray yourself as a person. I am very lucky and blessed to work and have worked with such terrific, sincere people. Through this job, I am a better person and will always be there for people who are in need.

*Joan Smith completed the Adult Diploma Program at the Cambridge Community Learning Center in 2003. She can be reached at <JAMAS-TIK96@aol.com>.*

Student  
Writing



## Adult Secondary Education...

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students. Young students in these programs may still have a connection to the high school and may only have a year or two to finish up their credits. The curriculum may be the same as day high school or modified. Two of the larger evening high schools in Massachusetts include New Bedford Evening School and Boston Central High School. Boston's program has been operating for over 100 years.

## Competency-Based

Both ADP and EDP are competency-based programs designed with adults in mind. Though programs differ regarding the specific benchmarks, competencies, tasks, or whatever term is used to describe the things they have to do, they are similar in philosophy. They were also based on national models—one originating in New York (offering 64 competencies) and one originating in Texas (offering 96 competencies).

These programs, often called alternative, external, or adult diploma programs, acknowledge that adults bring with them a wide range of practical skills and knowledge equivalent to what is achieved through a high school education. After assessing that equivalency, ADP and EDP programs provide a process where these adults can identify, sharpen, expand, and document this knowledge and these skills. Further, ADP and EDP programs offer a more flexible choice for students whose first language is not English.

Historically, credentials for the ADP and EDP programs have been approved on the local level, by the school committee in the city or town where students study. Like

high school students, they receive a diploma upon successful completion of program requirements.

However, accountability has been called into question as a result of Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. We'll get to that a little later in the article.

## Steps in an EDP (New York Model)

In Boston EDP programs, EDP assessors are people on staff at the local adult basic education program who assist students with completing the EDP requirements. Some people call them instructors, but that's evidently a misnomer. EDP advisors (people hired by, and who represent, the school department), provide an evaluative role. Finally, there is a coordinator of Boston EDP programs hired by the city.

Students must pass reading, writing, and math diagnostic tests. These diagnostics, administered by advisors, demonstrate the foundation of academic skills. The writing diagnostic must be approved by the coordinator of EDP. If students do not pass the diagnostics, they are referred to appropriate ABE or ESOL classes to help develop their skills.

Once they have passed the diagnostics they begin the "task" work for their diploma. Students work on five tasks:

- ◆ Community Resources
- ◆ Consumer Awareness
- ◆ Occupation and Career Awareness
- ◆ Health
- ◆ Government and Society

Students self-pace their work with an assessor to complete their tasks. Some work is done as a group, while other work is done independently. For example, students may attend a performance together and write about it, while

some other tasks require more individual exploration.

Student work submitted for a diploma is reviewed by the EDP assessor at the program level, the EDP advisor at the public school level, and the EDP coordinator.

## Steps in an ADP (Texas Model)

In ADP programs based on the Texas model, students go through an assessment process during their intake to determine whether ADP is an appropriate placement. The assessment includes a diagnostic reading test. In ADP and EDP programs an assessor works with the student; however in some programs, the assessor may also be a diploma counselor or diploma consultant as well as an assessor. This counselor also requests high school transcripts. In the ADP, programs may also work on a credit system. Students make a variety of choices to achieve a certain number of credits: college classes, classes at their learning centers, research projects, and other possibilities. The diploma counselor walks students through a credit and verification process.

## Community Learning Center

The Community Learning Center (CLC) in Cambridge developed its own program-designed ADP model. While they researched the Texas and New York models, as well as many other prototypes, they decided that no existing model met their needs. In CLC's ADP program, students receive credit for experiential learning. To attain a diploma, they must earn 224 CRLS credits, equivalent to 22.4 Carnegie units. (Carnegie units refers to one year of study or the equivalent in a

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**Adult Secondary Education...**

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secondary school study.) These credits must come from a combination of coursework and experiential credit. The demands are rigorous. While a student may complete a project based on experiences with and knowledge of topics relating to parenting (such as health), they do not receive credit, according to Bob Aimo, "just for being a parent." ADP students at the CLC take classes with GED students.

Also according to Bob Aimo, graduating ADP students display the following:

- ◆ Above a 10th grade reading, as evidenced by ABLE, and 11th grade for math
- ◆ A successful essay, achieved through as many drafts as the student needs
- ◆ Completion of a US history and civics requirement (difficult enough that some professionals shiver in their boots)

Students who enter the program already testing at a graduating level can opt to complete an individual project, approved in advance, in lieu of coursework

The student's entire portfolio, including the essay, is evaluated on a pass/fail basis by the ADP Consultant and the Candidacy Review Committee, which includes the CLC director, the Cambridge Rindge and Latin principal, local educators, and community representatives.

The flexibility of ADP/EDP programs, and the creativity and commitment of the participants and teachers involved, is often impressive.

**Accountability Issues: MCAS and Beyond**

For many years, oversight of high school programs, as well as EDP and ADP programs, has been with local school systems and their school boards. That is, school committees have been able to grant high school diplomas to students who meet locally defined criteria. This policy is changing as a result of Massachusetts Ed Reform Act of 1993. Starting with the class of 2003, legislators have mandated that students must now meet a competency determination in reading, writing, and math. To get a high school diploma, students in high school must pass the Massachusetts

Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test. They start taking MCAS in the 10th grade, and can retake it as many times as they need to, often in their junior or senior years.

Many adult basic educators have serious issues with these requirements; they preface their specific arguments with an overarching one: the legislature did not consider adults returning to school when they mandated these changes regarding high school diplomas.

Many adult basic education practitioners see MCAS as problematic for a number of reasons. These reasons have been presented by the Massachusetts Adult Diploma Programs Committee, formed in 2000, in the form of a position statement. We are reprinting that statement on page 16. According to the Massachusetts Adult Diploma Programs Committee member Dave Stearns, an EDP assessor since 1992 at the Jamaica Plain Adult Learning Program, the committee does not object to statewide standards for adults. They want graduates to display proficiency in reading,

*Continued on page 15*

**SABES Advisory Group Members FY04**

Susan Arase	Jewish Vocational Services, Boston
Jim Ayres	Center for New Americans, Northampton
Michelle Brown	Read/Write/Now, Springfield
Bruce Dahlquist	Central Mass REB, Worcester
Mary Dubois	New Bedford Public Schools, New Bedford
Don Edwards	Operation Bootstrap, Inc., Lynn
Karin Gertsch	North Shore Community Action/ABE, Peabody
Anne Goff	Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester
Betty Stone	SCALE, Somerville
Phyllis Whitney	Cape Cod Community College, Hyannis

The SABES Advisory Group meets three times a year to advise on SABES activities. If you have an idea that you would like the Advisory Group to discuss, send a message to Mina Reddy, Director, SABES Central Resource Center, <mreddy@worlded.org>.



# Join VERA 2004: Voter Education, Registration, and Action Campaign

By SILJA KALLENBACH

## What is it?

Voter Education, Registration, and Action campaign 2004 (VERA 04) is a nonpartisan effort aimed at adult literacy learners and program staff in the New England states. Its goal is to educate adult learners about voting and the topical electoral issues, and mobilize them to vote in the 2004 elections. VERA is sponsored by the New England Literacy Resource Center (NELRC) at World Education.

## Why should you join?

Voting is one of our most basic civil rights and responsibilities. Yet, barely one half (51.3%) of voting age adults voted in the 2000 United States presidential elections (Federal Election Commission, 2003). The United States voting rates are among the lowest of any democracy in the world. We should not allow another presidential election to go by with only one half of the voting age population bothering to go to the polls.

Studies show that the less education a person has, the less likely s/he is to vote. Yet, adult learners' well-being is profoundly affected by the outcomes of current public policy debates. Adult educators need to help learners to understand their self-interest, and to see that their vote does count. The 2004 elections are a teachable moment with high stakes outcomes for low-income people in the United States.

## What does it involve?

Joining VERA means making a commitment to

- ◆ teach about representative democracy, voting, and topical election issues
- ◆ encourage and help eligible students and staff register to vote, get to the polls and vote
- ◆ encourage noneligible students to talk to family members and friends who can vote
- ◆ track how many students voted and how many voted for the first time
- ◆ submit a brief report to NELRC due November 30, 2004

We recommend that you devote at least five classes to VERA-related topics, but it is up to the program or individual teacher to decide what specific topics, and how many sessions.

## What kind of support is provided?

- ◆ Five copies of the March 2004 issue of *The Change Agent* focused entirely on voting in the 2004 elections for each class signed on to the campaign
- ◆ Workshops for teachers who want to maximize use of *The Change Agent* resource (contact your regional SABES center for times and locations of workshops)
- ◆ Support from state task forces in New England set up to help coordinate campaigns and connect participants with partner organizations
- ◆ Web links to useful resources and organizations

**Join VERA! Go to <[www.nelrc.org/vera](http://www.nelrc.org/vera)> or call Silja Kallenbach at 617-482-9485.**

### Register Students On-Site

Call Boston-based, nonpartisan Dunk The Vote. They also make follow-up reminder calls to all new voters they register the week before the elections. Contact Ron Bell: 617-233-4238.

## Adult Secondary Education...

*Continued from page 13*

writing, and numeracy, as well as possess an array of other skills and abilities. However, they do suggest that there is room for certification of competency other than MCAS. He suggests that portfolios are a strong option.

## The Role of PAWG II

According to ACLS, the Performance Accountability Working Group (PAWG II) is "made up of teachers and directors of ABE programs and Department of Education staff who are working together to develop recommendations for performance accountability in adult basic education programs." The ADP Committee of PAWG II is charged with making recommendations to ACLS about the best way to meet competency determination for adults seeking a diploma. The ADP committee is exploring a variety of options. They are examining legal requirements, portfolio possibilities, and other issues. For more information about PAWG II, see <[www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pawg/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pawg/)>.

## Where Do Curriculum Frameworks Fit In?

We know that MCAS is supposed to reflect learning based on the K-12 curriculum frameworks. We know, too, that there are adult curriculum frameworks. These frameworks have not yet been submitted to the Board of Education, however, and some are not in final form. Some practitioners suggest that we need to resolve the ABE framework issue so we can have a system where curriculum and assessment (or competency determination) is congruent.

## Test Reform?

ACLS has contracted with UMass/Amherst to develop reading and math assessments based on the ABE curriculum frameworks. These are in the development stage. This may or may not affect the competency requirement issue for adult diplomas, but everyone I interviewed for this article mentioned it as a related issue.



## Certificate vs. Diploma

Although students now receive a diploma from ADP, EDP, and evening high school programs, that may change under Ed Reform. The state sets its own guidelines about what constitutes a diploma and what constitutes a certificate. The diploma/certificate issue for adults in ADP, EDP, and evening high school programs is still unresolved. This impacts students. Many adults will resist entering programs and completing requirements if the end result is less than a diploma.

## Role of MCAS in Dropout Rate

Many people assumed that GED, ADP, EDP, and evening high school programs would fill up because students are failing the MCAS and dropping out of high

school. According to Ruth Derfler at the DOE, the relationship between MCAS and adult diploma programs is not that simple. Some students seek a GED even if they have passed MCAS in the 10th grade. They drop out of school for the same reasons they always have: pregnancy, problems at home, social issues, and more. Poverty, overcrowded and under-funded schools, racism, and other problems contribute to an increasingly high school dropout rate. MCAS is one factor that contributes to kids dropping out, but many reasons predate the test requirement.

Still, it is important to note that, according to the April 6, 2004, issue of *The Boston Globe*, "dropout rates in some of Massachusetts' biggest school systems spiked in 2002-2003, the first year that students had to pass the MCAS to graduate."

## Conclusion

As it stands now, adult diploma programs are in a kind of limbo. They have a reprieve from the requirements of public high schools. But not for long.

It is incumbent upon all of us to, at the least, understand what is facing the field in this area. Even if we don't teach in an adult diploma program, we often counsel students who will move on to GED, ADP, EDP, or an evening high school.

*Lenore Balliro is the editor of Field Notes. She can be reached at <[lballiro2000@yahoo.com](mailto:lballiro2000@yahoo.com)>.*



# Position Statement on MCAS

BY MASSACHUSETTS ADULT DIPLOMA PROGRAMS

There are at least 33 adult high school diploma programs identified by the Massachusetts Department of Education (MDOE) located in 21 communities in Massachusetts. Many serve youth who are recent dropouts; others serve students age 22 and older. Although specific program designs differ, most work with the local high school or school system to award a high school diploma. All are locally funded through fees or funding from school systems or governments. Older students will be the ones most affected when MCAS is imposed as a graduation requirement.

After June 2005, all adult students must pass the MCAS tests or be denied a state-approved high school diploma.

In November 2002, Commissioner of Education Driscoll granted a waiver to older students from the MCAS tests as a graduation requirement. That waiver ends after June 2005. Younger students from the classes of 2003, 2004 and 2005 were excluded from the waiver. After the waiver was granted, there were varied interpretations of Commissioner Driscoll's intentions, since it included the phrase, "...clarify standards for graduation from these programs," as well as the statement: "Thereafter, students will also need to meet the competency determination in order to be awarded a high school diploma." While it was clear that a competency determination would be required, the wording of the waiver seemed to allow for development of different standards for adult students. In a November

2003 meeting to clarify the department's position, Associate Commissioner Jeff Nellhaus explicitly stated that MCAS is MDOE's competency determination. After

their area or local high school, and want the personal satisfaction of making up for an important misstep in their lives. Many others, especially foreign-born or those with

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*MCAS is not the appropriate competency determination for older students; adult competency determination should be based on adult standards.*

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June 2005, all students in Massachusetts, regardless of age or type of program, will be required to complete local requirements and pass the MCAS tests to qualify for a state-approved high school diploma.

## **Adult Diploma and the GED Diploma**

After the waiver ends, students who meet local requirements but have not passed MCAS can only be awarded a certificate of high school completion, not a diploma. Such a certificate is inferior to both a state-approved diploma and the GED, and it is not accepted for admission to state colleges and even some private colleges. It is also doubtful whether many employers or training and apprenticeship programs will accept such a certificate. Adult students do not want an inferior certificate.

Students choose alternative diploma programs because they want a high school diploma from

undocumented learning disabilities, do not perform well on tests like the GED or the MCAS.

However, they have developed solid basic skills by the time they graduate and successfully demonstrate those skills in their communities, colleges, training programs, and the workforce. Alternative diploma programs offer adults an opportunity to earn credit for real-life competencies gained through experience or the chance to make up learning missed in a previous high school. For others, especially younger students, GED may be the best choice. We need both GED and alternative programs in order to meet the needs of all of our students and ensure no adult is left behind.

MCAS is not the appropriate competency determination for older students; adult competency determination should be based on adult standards.

Most younger students (age 21 and under) have had 10 or more

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## Position Statement on MCAS...

*Continued from page 16*

years of instruction based on K-12 Curriculum Frameworks in preparation for the MCAS test. MCAS is not an appropriate form of assessment for older students (age 22 and up). Older students should be assessed by adult standards for several reasons:

- ◆ Older adult students and nearly all foreign-born adult students lack preparation for MCAS. Currently, only the English Language Arts and Mathematics tests are required. When the MCAS subject area tests are introduced, it will be impossible to remediate the 10 years of background and content knowledge required to pass.
- ◆ ABE funded classes are mandated by MDOE to follow ABE Curriculum Frameworks, not K-12 Curriculum Frameworks. Alternative diploma programs that place students in ABE funded classes do not and cannot prepare them for MCAS. There is no funding for adult programs to provide MCAS remediation.
- ◆ Adult programs and adult students are different from public high schools and their students.

Adult programs focus on literacy and academic skills more than on content knowledge, are funded at much lower per-pupil costs, and have far fewer hours of instruction than public high schools. Students over age 21 are working or looking for work, have family responsibilities, and cannot spend five days per week in school like younger students.



## What Is the Alternative to MCAS?

Massachusetts Adult Diploma Programs support the development of strong standards for adult students; however, those standards should be based on the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Curriculum Frameworks. Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), the adult education division of MDOE, has contracted with UMass-Amherst to develop new standardized assessments based on those adult cur-

riculum standards. In addition to the UMass assessment work, ACLS has also established a Performance Accountability Working Group of practitioners to develop recommendations for performance accountability. We hope to work with them to develop a set of standards appropriate for adult diploma students.

What are the human and financial costs if MCAS is implemented for older students?

The cost will be high for the state and its citizens. Adult diploma programs are locally funded, not state funded. If they cannot award state-approved high school diplomas, most of these programs will be forced to close, resulting in higher state costs as more students are forced into state-funded GED programs. Older and foreign-born students will take longer and cost more to prepare for the GED; many will not pass. Without a high school diploma, thousands of adults will be denied opportunities for training, college, and career advancement. This will have a negative impact on our workforce and our communities. We cannot leave these students and their families behind. The price is too high.

*Mass. ADP Position Statement, 2/23/04.*

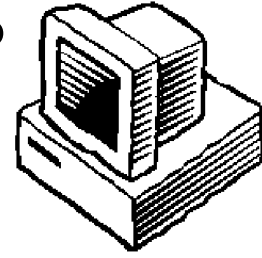
## Famous People with GEDs

Dave Thomas, Founder of Wendy's  
Michael J. Fox, Actor  
James J. Florio, Former Governor of New Jersey  
John Michael Montgomery, Country Singer  
Tommy Nunez, NBA Referee  
Kelly McGillis, Actress  
Waylon Jennings, Country Singer  
Ruth Ann Minner, Governor, Delaware

Mary Lou Retton, Olympic Gold Medalist  
Wally Amos, Famous Amos Cookie Creator  
Ben Nighthorse Campbell, U.S. Senator  
Bill Cosby, Comedian  
Walter Anderson, Editor, Parade Magazine  
  
Also, Former Mayors of Cambridge Walter Sullivan and Al Vellucci were ADP recipients!

*Can you add names to this list? Email Lenore Balliro, editor, at <lballiro@worlded.org>.*

# Web Resources for GED and ADP



## PBS Literacy Link: GED Connection

<[http://litlink.ket.org/ged\\_connect.aspl](http://litlink.ket.org/ged_connect.aspl)>

Learners preparing for the GED exam have several options with GED Connection:

- ◆ Learners can take a free online pretest to see where they need to study in each of the five GED content areas, then go right to the Internet activities that will help most.
- ◆ Thirty-nine half-hour video programs air on many public television stations across the country and are available on VHS tape.
- ◆ Three workbooks cover all five areas of the GED exam—Language Arts: Reading and Writing, Science & Social Studies; and Mathematics.

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## GED Lesson Plans

<[www.wesleyrankin.org/gedhome/](http://www.wesleyrankin.org/gedhome/)>

This web site provides self-contained lesson plans intended for classroom use or independent study. It is fairly user-friendly and takes users through step-by-step processes. It is designed by the Wesley Rankin Community Center in Dallas, Texas.

## Multiple Intelligences, the GED, and Me

<[www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall/fob/1999/jean.htm](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall/fob/1999/jean.htm)>

In this wonderful article, from a 1999 issue of *Focus on Basics*, Martha Jean says that she “wanted to figure out a way for students to use their multiple intelligences to connect productively with GED material.” Check this article out for some creative ideas for approaching GED subject matter.

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## Calculator Practice

<[www.mvaea.com/](http://www.mvaea.com/)>

This web site will get you to seven lessons, seven practice activities, and complete answers for using the Casio FX-260 calculator, the calculator chosen by the GED testing service. Jeri Braunagel, a teacher affiliated with the Missouri Valley Adult Education Association, developed the material.

### **Looking for a way to prepare adults to be more active users of technology?**

Published by World Education, **Under Construction: Building Web Sites as a Project-based Learning Activity for ABE/ESOL Classes**, is a short guidebook designed to provide adult literacy and ESOL staff developers and teachers with some simple, user-friendly advice on building web sites as a project-based learning activity.

Under Construction is available for \$10 per copy plus shipping.  
For bulk orders of over twenty copies, please contact us for special pricing info.

To order, please send your name, organization, address, phone number, and a check payable to World Education to the following address:

Tina White  
World Education  
44 Farnsworth Street  
Boston, MA 02210

For more information, contact Tina White at 617-482-9485 or <[twhite@worlded.org](mailto:twhite@worlded.org)>.



## Mark Your Calendar

### **April 24–28**

Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE), National Conference

*Discover Columbus: Discover the Best of Adult Education*

Location: Columbus, OH

Contact: 866-996-2223 Web: <[www.coabeo4.org](http://www.coabeo4.org)>

### **April 28–May 7**

International Reading Association (IRA), 49th Annual Convention

*Teaching the World to Read*

Location: Reno-Tahoe, NV

Contact: IRA, 302-731-1600, x345 Web: <[www.reading.org/2004/](http://www.reading.org/2004/)>

### **April 29–May 2**

National Multicultural Institute (NMCI), 19th Annual Conference

*Diversity and Coalition Building in Times of Crisis: At Home and Abroad*

Location: Bethesda, MD

Contact: NMCI, 202-483-0700 Web: <[www.nmci.org/conferences/default.htm](http://www.nmci.org/conferences/default.htm)>

### **May 27–30**

Adult Education Research Conference (AERC), AERC 2004

*Adult Education for Democracy, Social Justice and a Culture of Peace*

Location: Victoria, British Columbia

Contact: Tom Sork, <[tom.sork@ubc.ca](mailto:tom.sork@ubc.ca)> Web: <[www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/informat.htm](http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/informat.htm)>

### **June 24–30**

American Library Association (ALA), 128th Annual Conference

Location: Orlando, FL

Contact: ALA, 800-545-2433 Web: <[www.ala.org/events](http://www.ala.org/events)>

### **June 28–30**

Centre for Literacy of Quebec/Movement for Canadian Literacy, Summer Institute 2004

*Adult Basic Education: Impact of Policy on Practice*

Location: Montreal, Quebec

Contact: Dawson College, 514-931-8731, x1415 Web: <[www.nald.ca/PROVINCE/QUE/litcent/whatsnew/sli2004/1.htm](http://www.nald.ca/PROVINCE/QUE/litcent/whatsnew/sli2004/1.htm)>

### **July 4–7**

Correctional Education Association (CEA), 59th Annual Conference

*Embrace the Legacy: Our Commitment Their Future*

Location: Baltimore, MD

Contact: Chuck Laws, <[cjlaws@bellatlantic.net](mailto:cjlaws@bellatlantic.net)> Web: <[www.ceanational.org](http://www.ceanational.org)>

### **October 6–9**

ProLiteracy, 2nd Annual Worldwide Conference

Location: Oklahoma City, OK

Contact: ProLiteracy, 315-422-9121, x319 Web: <[www.proliteracy.org/conference/conf2004.asp](http://www.proliteracy.org/conference/conf2004.asp)>

*Compiled by: Lou Wollrab, SABES Information Coordinator (Boston, MA)*

# Field Notes Mailing List Update

Are you receiving *Field Notes* addressed to people who haven't been in your program for, like, 10 years??

We don't want to waste paper and resources, so help us keep our mailing list updated!

- ◆ If you are receiving unwanted copies of *Field Notes*, PLEASE let us know, and we will remove those names.
- ◆ If you have new staff who want *Field Notes*, PLEASE let us know and we will add those names.

Simple, right? Please email the following information to Heather Brack at <hbrack@worlded.org>.

## Please Remove:

name: \_\_\_\_\_  
program: \_\_\_\_\_

## Please Add:

name: \_\_\_\_\_  
program: \_\_\_\_\_  
address: \_\_\_\_\_  
phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
email: \_\_\_\_\_



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