Summary

## 2015 Adult Education Project

Working Group: Connections

**Attending**

Dr. Al Alba

Joan Ayotte

Jennifer Bryant

April Brown

Jason Colonies

Melanie LaMountain

Jane May

Kristen McKenna

Sharon Miles

*Brady Dunklee, facilitating*

*Diana Perdomo, note-taking*

**Absent**

Cameron Ennis

June 19, 2015

8:30-11:00 a.m.

Westbay Community Action

Administration Office

224 Buttonwoods Ave

Warwick, RI 02886

401 732-4666, ext. 120

At its second meeting, the Connections Working Group reviewed its work at the previous meeting, discussed questions of leadership and partnership in adult education generally, and brainstormed a number of possible recommendations and action steps for the field.

**Leadership:**  The group affirmed and reiterated some of the frustrations discussed in the previous meeting about missed connections, and focused on issues of leadership and quality partnership. Several models of leadership researched for the Access working group were discussed, along with New Jersey’s stakeholder-driven blueprint development process for WIOA, and the RI Commission for Health Advocacy & Equity.

**Partnership Quality:** The group reviewed the Partnerships For Success rubric from RI Campus Compact, which provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating the quality and depth of partnership. Partnership involves a set of learned skills and practices. They noted and discussed that Campus Compact had surveyed partner programs, and found that there are often divergent assessments of depth or quality by different members of the same partnership. The group expressed consensus that Adult Education partnerships, by and large, are “emergent” at best. They mentioned Year Up as an example of a program with excellent partnerships, but noted as well that Year Up is a national brand that serves a very specific clientele that is young and already has high school credentials. The group asked how strong, quality connections might be developed for harder to serve populations.

**One Stops:** The connections with the One Stop Centers were discussed, and contrasted with Massachusetts. Connections between adult education agencies and One Stop Centers in RI are marginal at best, and most services are available only to clients who test at 9th grade or higher proficiency. The idea of a navigator working between One Stops and adult education programs was discussed.

**Also Discussed:** There was a good deal of discussion about the GED and other high school equivalency assessments, with an apparent consensus that the state should explore TASC and HiSET as alternatives. Working Group participant Cameron Ennis had shared an outline of adult education organizations, government agencies and stakeholders by email, and the group discussed and supported this type of transparent mapping effort across siloes. Several examples of education for computer coding were discussed as innovative models based in strong connections.

**Priority Recommendations:** After small-group brainstorming sessions produced recommendations and action steps, the group categorized the ideas generated under the following headings: Infrastructure, Accountability, Resources; Program Design; Leadership, Representation and Marketing. This brainstorm is transcribed in a separate attachment. The discussion noted the difference between cultivating champions and establishing systemic support. They discussed a current disconnect with workforce development and career ladders, and better connections with higher education. They described the need for an ongoing process of engagement to consider these issues beyond the current 3-meeting process.