**How can adult education in Rhode Island be improved?**

**WIOA**

* The state and providers need lawmakers' support to enact WIOA in a productive way.

**Standards & Quality/ Curriculum**

* Better metrics for determining program quality"
* Holding all adult education programs to the same performance expectations and participant outcomes. There should be an expected level of performance quality and linked support services regardless of community or personal connectedness.
* I would like to see us standardize and align assessment, curriculum and instruction for all AE programs
* I would like to see us create curricula by levels. Students entering adult education have increased and student needs have diversified which calls for a core syllabus at each level to define academic achievements.
* I would like to see credentials for academic achievements at each level for AE students.
* In addition, I would like to see us strengthen our curriculum by adding critical thinking, public speaking, study skills and writing to develop essential academic and employment skills
* Reconcile personalized tutoring -- such as teaching toward a CDL -- with generalized test questions.
* Continue to build on mechanisms that provide for continuous improvement in delivery of services
* Develop systems where curricula are continuously reviewed for relevancy, purpose and effectiveness
* There were committees of involved staff that had worked together to create the Critical Links for adult education in RI. It seems that parts of these suggestions have been discarded and ignored. We had created a system of standards to guide adult education in RI. Then we were all trained on how to use them. This was easy because they conformed to our experiences. I feel as though the Common Core Standards are being forced upon us. They are entirely inapplicable for my ESOL students who score under 230 on the CASAS. My students are learning the fundamentals of life skills such as communicating with coworkers and doctors etc.
* Can it standardize Adult Ed. curriculum relating to the foundational education subjects while aligning them with a work-readiness and career pathways plan?
* One way is to make high quality software with excellent curriculum available like SkillsTutor to all programs free of charge.
* Updated curriculum.
* Collation of curriculum offered by providers in a central repository for all to review and become familiar with so if a student moves from community to community it will be possible to see what they've experienced.

**Information and Access**

* The cost should be affordable and the support for students needs to approve. So many adult learners see these two items as barriers to their learning. I hear excuses like, "I can't afford to go," "No one is there to help me figure it out," and "How am I supposed to go back to school if I have to work and take care of my kids."
* Provide multiple opportunities in urban neighborhoods.
* Expand programming
* More services for those individuals who fall below the 9th grade level; specifically for those with learning challenges.
* More ABE (lower level) services
* More availability on a community level
* In general, access, whether it be time or location.
* Easy access to all individuals.
* Making more programs accessible to all by: offering easily accessible location, varied times and support such as childcare, bus passes)
* More ABE/GED program slots available at to participants
* More programs/ advertising
* Advertising in school for the parents who need to learn English at a free or low cost at schools"
* Development of consortium of small providers can cut down on administrative costs = more students served
* Can applicant registration dates/times be more accessible for working families and under employed participants?
* Can there be a clearing house where all training and education opportunities are listed for e-access?
* Crossover information distribution for young adults 18-24 that might be enrolled in DOL youth programming.
* I think most, if not all, of the crucial pieces of a continuum of services is available but very poorly coordinated. Improvements need to address transparency. The adult education system is not adequately coordinated into a clear, transparent system which every adult in RI might be able to access and independently determine the relevance of a service to their individual lives.
* Better access, more guidance for students, more structure?
* More accessible. More community outreach.
* There needs to be one place where students can find the services they need. They shouldn't have to go place to place to find the program that they need.
* Offer it at convenient times and across the state not only in the cities.
* Raise awareness about what's available
* Busy adults can find it hard to attend onsite classes and would benefit from online access."
* Recognizing that having programs that are conveniently located to students is a positive thing.
* More frequent classes
* More variety of classes and levels more tailored to student’s needs.
* Greater media exposure to meet the needs.
* More classes and more availability to the public.
* Long waiting lists for some programs and long wait times due to the specific managed enrollment schedule.
* All service providers, including educators, job trainers, labor and training departments, etc. must re-think ACCESS for all levels of our residents and must let go of ""silos"" of funding and services. Territoriality will go away if we focus on the people we want to serve and what they need from us.
* More, affordable ways for adults to get High School equivalency
* By expanding access to services and eliminating the wait list, many adults inquiring about workforce training programs we offer need access to adult education to increase their literacy and numeracy to engage in training and obtain industry specific credentials
* There seems to be a lack of evening classes. Or at least my sense is that demand outpaces supply
* Make it free.
* Literacy is required for many reasons, not just for jobs. Radio and TV public service ads -- lots of them -- encouraging people to read, removing any shame they may feel for not being able to read well or at all, and directing them to screening that places them in the appropriate programs asap -- no waiting lists. Have adequate numbers of programs and trained volunteers in place to support everyone who seeks literacy help.
* Make sure the services remain local and are not merged into large networks. Make sure we have programs for special needs, low literacy populations that are easily accessible.
* We need more basic education/literacy for English-speaking people. For example, adults who speak English but have limited reading/writing and math skills and aren't prepared to start and/or succeed at GED/HS diploma programs.
* Also, money would help. I have many adults who come in needing instruction materials, and I simply don't have the money to buy what they need
* As above more education and training for those who missed out the first time around. So many of my students have had learning struggles as part of what brought them to prison. And they are getting out unprepared to support themselves and their families. It's a systems failure.
* More outreach to those who will benefit from it.
* The "system" needs to face the reality of how many adults are at low literacy and English proficiency, and tailor basic education classes for them. Trying to teach job skills at the same time only delays basic skill development.
* Offer more learning disability assessments for older students. Most were 'socially advanced' through the public schools and were never diagnosed with disabilities, yet clearly have disabilities. We need a program offering that accommodates these students on a larger scale and it should be provided to all A/E programs since it was the public school system /government that failed these students.
* Better support for learning disabilities and improved access to technology.
* More educational services for inmates at the ACI.
* Offer more courses at lower prices for literacy and GED courses
* There are so many adults who could benefit from adult education and so few that we are able to serve - increased funding so that good teachers could actually serve in adult ed full time (as opposed to 15 hours a week max)
* Even after a person graduated we should continue given classes
* Could it be offered in the public schools while children are there for parents?
* Means test for ability to pay for classes.

**GED**

* Have more alternatives to offer as opposed to the new GED
* Improving Literacy would be of tremendous value. The 2014 GED computer based test has raised the bar and students must be able to comprehend and perform higher thinking skills.
* Diversify high school equivalency test
* Offer more than one high school equivalency assessment, especially for older student who have been out of school for many years and have not been exposed to Common Core Curriculum standard expectations. The rigor of the new exam is not practical for students who have been out of the public school systems for 10+ years.
* Also, having outlets for people besides the GED test, such as other diploma programs, and a selection of training that doesn't require the GED.
* We also need an alternative to the GED. The GED ISN'T the answer to your adults in need to attaining their high school diploma.
* Bring on the HighSet!"
* Switch to a paper based test (even for the three years),

**Career Pathways**

* More adults need to have the opportunity to enter and advance in a career pathway.
* clear pathways from learning to employment

**College Transitions**

* Stronger partnerships with higher education to capture and fund learning for adults not yet prepared for higher education.

**System Structure & Governance**

* Keep adult education at RIDE and make the administrator of AE a direct report to the Education Commissioner.
* With increased resources (time, money, support) and respect. Respect would give adult education a seat at policy tables and a voice in decision making that affects learning for all.
* By creating real opportunity to be an equal among the partners-RIDE, DLT, higher education and employers.
* Perhaps as such a small and politicized state, RI adult education might benefit from building agreements with neighboring states.
* RIDE's top leadership must make Adult Education a priority and clearly reflect that in its management structure.
* More transparency in state-level decisions
* Involve more adult learners in the decision making process of what AE is and does for RI adults."
* Greater coordination between adult ed, DLT, GWB and institutions of higher education.
* Have an organized system like the other educational designations.
* Perhaps a more unified system
* Make conscious decisions regarding the effectiveness of a centralized decision making model and where autonomy of the 34 agencies best serves the changing needs of the AE population. Especially when improving outcomes and earnings for AE students while aligned with regulatory requirements (e.g. WIOA).
* The chain of command between the RIDE commissioner and Adult Ed needs to be a direct link. Everyone/group in that chain needs to be well-versed in Adult Ed.
* Adult Education Director within RIDE needs to be in direct contact with the Commissioner of Education - on equal footing with the K-12 Director - so that Adult Education is not an afterthought.
* Move the Director of Adult Education under the commissioner in the overall scheme. Ensure that all people in the Adult Education chain of command have Adult Education experience.
* Adult education in RI can be improved by more transparency and trust between RIDE and agencies.
* Move the Director of RI/AE to a position directly below the commissioner.

**Adult Education Workforce**

* Continue PD opportunities, increase salaries so that the highest quality of educators will seek out adult ed. and most importantly stay on the job.
* More professional training for teachers. Professionalizing the field with commensurate payment for teachers.
* Teacher stability and pay for teacher performance. Full-time teaching positions with benefits and a clear system for teacher performance review and salary increases.
* Better pay and benefits for teachers.
* Capacity for more instructors so that programs can offer more classes and sections of classes.
* More relevant PD. Better annual conferences.
* To maintain an excellent staff, we need to have salaries that will keep qualified educators in RI.
* Make it possible for teachers to do this as their profession, instead of making it only realistic for retired people or two-income homes.
* Teachers need to be proficient in technology to use in classrooms and help students use it.
* We also need to be able to provide better salaries for teachers and administrators so we can attract more young people to the field.
* Create more full time teaching positions: support stability in the field.
* Creating a more cohesive system that allows for proper teacher education, professional security
* More professionalization of the field (i.e., job security, benefits, continuing education, credentialization, etc.)
* More technical training
* Establish credentials/certifications for teachers, BUT ONLY if pay for them is substantially increased.
* Allow for more full-time teaching positions, with benefits, to further professionalize Adult Education.
* Administrators need to be more in tuned with the needs of adult learners.
* More voice for practitioners and learners
* It would be great if the teachers who are experts in a given discipline and team up and give presentations on teaching the various content areas for the GED 2014 Exam. For example the teachers with strong math, reading and writing, science, and social studies can put together seminars throughout the year to present lessons in their respective fields.....Teachers teaching teachers their best practices.
* I would also like to see a robust, professional development system that mandates, adequate paid time for teachers to engage and participate in creating curriculum, conducting best practices sessions and developing assessments.
* Providing quality professional development for employees
* There are so many adults who could benefit from adult education and so few that we are able to serve - increased funding so that good teachers could actually serve in adult ed full time (as opposed to 15 hours a week max)
* Make all of the "alphabet" agencies more comprehensible to professionals who are new to the system.

**Planning & Vision**

* Vision for sustainability and shared goals

**Priorities**

# Funding

* Funding based on students’ needs and goals and accomplishments not just level gain on CASAS test.
* Increased funding to offer more hours and classes, support staff, materials, and technology.
* Money is limited and we need to make the best investments possible for ensuring our adult students receive the best possible education and training.
* More consistent funding for new initiatives (e.g. technology)"
* Fund what works.
* Funding! So many of the smaller agencies have little money for technology.
* We need more funding in order to offer more classes to serve all those adults who need to improve their skills
* Less restrictive funding requirements and having a FAIR funding formula for programs.
* RIDE and other funders need to understand their programs better (needs, challenges, student body), there is a big disconnect.
* Provide more grants in order to apply more technological use to support our students' success.
* Eliminate performance based funding. It is not helpful if you want to serve a wide variety of students, including those at very low levels. The Performance based funding only encourage "creaming" of students and playing with data.
* Funding for students' home access to digital literacy
* More funding, more awareness of the importance of adult ed within larger RI communities
* More resources
* Funding for agency programs should be for three (3) years (not 5 years).
* Funding should not determine educational quality.
* More funding for high performing programs
* More funding to make sure wraparound services are available.
* ABE and ASE (with ESL as necessary) must be properly funded to deal with the huge number of Rhode Islanders who cannot read at all or read poorly. This is an enormous drain on our state's economy and an underlying cause of the state's budget problems.
* More uniformity and less focus on performance based funding. Some programs work hard to implement the initiatives and yet still have problems retaining their funding.
* Adult literacy program need to be supported at the highest levels and more adequately funded
* I believe we fund too many programs for a state this size.
* When youth drop out of high school, the funding for that student needs to follow the student. Currently, if a youth is in GED (under 18), she is kept on the school roster, the GED provider must report to the school monthly, when the youth achieves the GED the school gets to count it as a diploma and has been able to keep the money while not educating the student. This has to change. Schools should not continue to benefit from forcing youth out.
* Be less dependent on CASAS scores to determine funding.
* The strength in diverse organizations also leads to overlapping of services and lack of clarity in resources available for the adult education population.
* There are so many adults who could benefit from adult education and so few that we are able to serve - increased funding so that good teachers could actually serve in adult ed full time (as opposed to 15 hours a week max)
* The performance based funding (PBF) formula needs to be drastically revised. It has the potential to change the landscape of adult education if allowed to continue as designed. A strategic plan for funding needs to be developed. Currently, it does not account for funding specific types of services (ESL, GED etc.) in specific areas of need (Providence, South County, Westbay, Northern RI etc.). So if a program's funding is eliminated or decreased then services to that area are affected.

# Collaboration and Coordination

* Adult education also needs to gather more broad-based recognition and support from traditional workforce training providers, schools and employers. Part of that is learning to work together, recognizing what other stakeholders can bring to the table, and finding common ground/goals.
* Stronger partnerships with higher education to capture and fund learning for adults not yet prepared for higher education.
* More interagency collaboration and solidarity
* Having better connections with state/federal organizations.
* Make the pathway for adults (who need services, education, etc.) more streamlined --more collaboration among programs--less competition for funding.
* Sharing resources, collaborating, communicating about what's available--to fellow practitioners but especially to those who need programs, broadening access, expanding what's working
* I would like to see us standardize and align assessment, curriculum and instruction for all AE programs
* We need to be better connected with each other and with other social service agencies so we can provide MEANINGFUL wrap around services for our students
* I also think there is lots of room to be more involved in K-12 education in RI, whether that be sharing resources, best practices, PD, or simply making the connection that many of our adult learners are grandparents/parents/siblings/relatives/etc. of k-12 students. In other words, what can adult ed do to help meet k-12's goal of increase parent involvement in their students' educations?
* Agencies currently funded through RIDE need to collaborate and share resources instead of competing and strengthening their own "nests" (especially administratively) to the detriment of students needing services.
* Developing networks in regions of the state.
* Collaboration between adult education programs would reduce wasted time and effort as well as provide more opportunities to meet the needs of learners.
* I think it is very clear that RI has yet to embrace a level of collaboration between state and local resources which would provide its citizens with a coordinated system of adult education. I also think that there is a need to focus on including workforce education through adult education programs, colleges, and industry partners into this coordinated system.
* More dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders is needed.
* There seems to be significant overlap in services in most areas. It would be great to see the development of "Centers of Excellence" among adult ed. providers in an effort to eliminate competition and promote collaboration.
* Greater coordination between adult ed, DLT, GWB and institutions of higher education.
* Better collaboration amongst providers, a statewide approach that brings together resources and providers to realize statewide efficiencies and unified purpose.
* Better alignment with employers and public education system. Reducing the need by producing less need in graduating students.

# Outcomes/Reporting

* Balance leadership's emphasis on outcomes with an emphasis on learner satisfaction & understanding that not all learners are able to reach outcomes within a single year.
* NEW DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. We can make a stronger case for our programs when the data is better-quality... plus, we invest hours and hours each year dealing with CALIS issues, CALIS errors, CALIS being VERY slow..."
* Holding all adult education programs to the same performance expectations and participant outcomes. There should be an expected level of performance quality and linked support services regardless of community or personal connectedness.
* Be less dependent on CASAS scores to determine funding.
* clarity of student outcomes
* Gauge programs by service to individuals (e.g. student goals, referrals) instead of testing outcomes.
* Unfortunately, CALIS is extremely unreliable. There have been serious problems with CALIS for years now that have not been resolved, even though reports have been submitted to Benchmark. Relying on a faulty computer program is a major concern.

# Practices

* Majority of clients need to be fully invested in the program and not just to satisfy the requirements to keep getting money from an agency.
* Increasing efficiency of small programs and programs overall
* By realizing the importance of both classroom and one-on-one tutoring. Some adult learners do not do well in a classroom setting. Also, some learners benefit from tutoring in addition to their classroom instruction.
* Tie contextualized learning to the local labor market needs
* Administration needs to be more focused on the needs of the students rather than funding. GED students need more face to face time and educational time in order to ensure success. Also, scope and sequence in correlation with a Common Core curriculum should be implemented. Student placement should be aligned to skills and curriculum, not placed by numbers in a classroom.
* Also, some dedicated instruction in soft skills would be hugely beneficial for the adult learners.
* Learn what the people need to enter American society and address those needs

# Workforce and Work Readiness

* If adult ed is truly about learning, teaching critical thinking and life skills, adult learners will be better positioned to manage their families and move into career fields that are appropriate for their particular interests and skills.
* Make the connection to workforce development.
* A pipeline into businesses, so that adult learners can transition to work successfully. Also, all RI businesses and industries should understand that supporting AE is a responsibility they share. "
* Expanded and strengthened partnerships with employers providing opportunities to develop work-place skills and connect further education with opportunities for employment and advancement.
* Show direct tie-ins to work training programs.
* In addition to preparation for college, have more preparation for the trades.
* Provide additional support to students who are unemployed and in workforce training and who just entered workforce (bus passes, clothing allowance, small car repairs, fee for industry certifications etc.)
* We also need more free/ very low cost workforce trainings. For example, there are many Certified Nursing Assistant training programs, but they are prohibitively expensive for unemployed or minimum wage workers.
* Better integration of workforce development with economic development aims at the top: more teaching of job skills in expanding industries and also areas that receive higher pay.
* Could there be more opportunities for adults to be in classes that develop their language skills as they also develop skills for particular better paying jobs? How does one prepare to be an electrician, plumber, etc.? Could the higher level English language students be continuing to develop their writing and reading skills as they learned the trade?
* Trade schools and apprenticeships! Not all need a college degree
* Tie contextualized learning to the local labor market needs
* Can it standardize Adult Ed. curriculum relating to the foundational education subjects while aligning them with a work-readiness and career pathways plan?
* Solving issues of student attendance would go a long way.
* Larger classroom space, more individual tutoring sessions.
* Aligning with employers to focus on needs of business and employers.
* There should be as many partnerships with employers as possible to provide learning in an environment and with examples that would be applicable to prospective employment.
* Also, as many participants as possible should leave with the National Work Readiness Credential."

# System Evaluation

* I believe we fund too many programs for a state this size.
* As noted above, the system seems disjointed.
* Stricter statewide enforcement of attendance so that we do not have perpetual repeaters who are in programs for more than 2 years. Better guidelines for NEDP candidates who begin assessment and never finish. The assessors need to be paid for their time, not for the number of completions.
* When youth drop out of high school, the funding for that student needs to follow the student. Currently, if a youth is in GED (under 18), she is kept on the school roster, the GED provider must report to the school monthly, when the youth achieves the GED the school gets to count it as a diploma and has been able to keep the money while not educating the student. This has to change. Schools should not continue to benefit from forcing youth out.
* The "system" needs to face the reality of how many adults are at low literacy and English proficiency, and tailor basic education classes for them. Trying to teach job skills at the same time only delays basic skill development.
* Less bureaucracy (meetings and reports) and more hands-on supports are needed.
* The strength in diverse organizations also leads to overlapping of services and lack of clarity in resources available for the adult education population.
* Make conscious decisions regarding the effectiveness of a centralized decision making model and where autonomy of the 34 agencies best serves the changing needs of the AE population. Especially when improving outcomes and earnings for AE students while aligned with regulatory requirements (e.g. WIOA).
* By creating a seamless system of services at all levels in every community. We need to not be territorial about our students and focus on the best possible program to meet their needs and help connect them to that.

# Supportive Services

# More funding to make sure wraparound services are available

# It needs to connect better with other services and systems supporting adult learners.

# We need to be better connected with each other and with other social service agencies so we can provide MEANINGFUL wrap around services for our students

* We need more support services for adult learners, i.e. subsidized transportation and childcare that lasts for at least 6 weeks after the completion of a workforce training. We have students who complete training and then their childcare is cut off immediately and they don't have the means to do a proper job search.
* Front-end, preventative case management services
* The state should provide more vocational education options.
* Meeting their needs holistically to help them succeed (e.g., Child care, transportation when needed).

# Technology

* So many of the smaller agencies have little money for technology.
* Provide more grants in order to apply more technological use to support our students' success.
* Funding for students' home access to digital literacy
* Busy adults can find it hard to attend onsite classes and would benefit from online access.
* Much better embracing of online technologies with strong moderation skills of those coordinating the learning experiences.
* Affordable broadband access for every RI resident ensures that they can grow in their self-efficacy and life-long learning.
* The 2014 GED computer based test has raised the bar and students must be able to comprehend and perform higher thinking skills.
* Better support for learning disabilities and improved access to technology.
* I believe we need to make better use of technology and have access for learners at their convenience and at their level.
* It could improve by aligning minimum technology standards into a blended learning curriculum that would ultimately better prepare an individual for a job.
* More digital literacy classes

# Comparisons

# Program-Specific

* I would suggest you look very closely at the College Unbound Model. College Unbound is a supportive environment which allows adults to work full time and complete their college degree. Classes are project and community based and relevant to the work the adult students do. It's a win-win situation.

# Other/Unsorted

# +ESL

* I feel as though the Common Core Standards are being forced upon us. They are entirely inapplicable for my ESOL students who score under 230 on the CASAS. My students are learning the fundamentals of life skills such as communicating with coworkers and doctors etc.
* Spanish speakers need listening and speaking primarily. All other needs are met in their sub-culture or by the various Spanish language translations seen and heard throughout the state (advertising, TV, radio, etc. Speaking and listening is not as available."

**+Awareness**

* Adult education, especially adult basic education (ABE), and secondary education (ASE) should be a major concern of the governor and the General Assembly.
* Multiple coordinated categorical federal initiatives to drive policy for an overall state effort to highlight the need for adult education
* Greater visibility, appreciation for the field's work
* increasing public awareness as well through media and other avenues"

"I would like to see a statewide campaign to embrace educating adults. Banners, billboards, advertisements. On-going, year after year. RI embraces lifelong learning

* There is such mystery in the educational world outside of high school and college. The profile of AE needs to be clarified, recognized and celebrated. It should be a common part of the public conversation. Why doesn't the Dept. of Ed, the Gov., Senators and legislators, mayors, etc. ever say the words “Adult Education" to a forum that is not made up of Adult Ed practitioners? This is the real mystery to ME!