



# National Coalition For Literacy

## **NCL Update** **February 2009**

---

### **Dollar General Speakers Highlight GED as Pathway to Economic Success**

“1.3 million Georgians is a not a number that we can accept,” noted Ron Jackson, Commission of the Technical College System of Georgia at the Dollar General Presentation Series in Atlanta last month. More than 1.3 million Georgians do not have their high school diploma. Last year over 19,000 GED diplomas were awarded, but many more adult learners are waiting; the state has set a challenge to more than double the number to 40,000 GED graduates annually. “Our students deserve it, our communities need it, our state demands it,” Jackson shared, encouraging all to accept the challenge. He was followed by Debra Nixon, a recent graduate of a GED program, funded by Dollar General, who was “delighted to thank Dollar General in person for changing my life.”



Debra Nixon, Adult Learner and Recent GED Graduate

Josephine Reed-Taylor, Assistant Commissioner, from the Office of Adult Education, gave an overview of the adult education delivery system and the population served. More than 100 adult education professionals, business representatives and literacy advocates participated in the meeting, focusing on ways to engage businesses and other stakeholders in advocating for adult education and literacy services. This seventh meeting in the Dollar

General Presentation Series was sponsored by Dollar General Literacy Foundation and convened by the National Coalition for Literacy in partnership with the Office of Adult Education, Technical College System of Georgia.

The Dollar General Presentation Series moves west to Jackson, Mississippi, for the eighth meeting in the series on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

---

**Texas Update:** In May 2008, NCL, Dollar General, Texas LEARNS, Texas Council of Adult Basic Education and Literacy Texas convened the Dollar General Series in Houston. Recently, more than 400 adult learners, teachers and program administrators were set to gather at the Texas Capitol to draw attention to the need for adult literacy services. For more details, read coverage of the event in the Star-Telegram. <http://www.star-telegram.com/242/story/1189908.html> Meanwhile, the Texas Education Commissioner Robert Scott cited adult education as a priority for the 2010-2011 budget, noting that it is both an education and economic development issue and asking for \$50 million in funding. Read more at <http://www.thecherokeean.com/News/2009/0211/statewide/schoolfinance.html>

---

### **Dollar General Offers Grants for Adult Literacy and Family Literacy**

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation is again offering grants to non-profits that provide direct services to adults in need of literacy assistance and to family literacy service providers. The maximum grant amount is \$20,000; grant applications are due March 4 and will be announced on May 14, 2009. Grants are also available for youth literacy programs, back-to-school grants for schools and for school libraries. For complete details, visit the website at <http://www.dollargeneral.com/Community/Pages/GrantPrograms.aspx>.

---

### **American Library Association and the National Institute for Literacy Hold Virtual Summit**

ALA's Committee on Literacy and the National Literacy Summit will hold a Virtual Library Literacy Summit, *Advocacy Libraries, and Literacy – Literacy for All*, on Tuesday, April 7 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm Eastern Time. The summit will be live in Washington, DC and virtual everywhere else. ALA President Jim Rettig and President-Elect Camila Alire along with library and literacy leaders, educators, and advocates will discuss the role of libraries in literacy, explore innovative library partnerships, understand the literacy crisis in the US, and brainstorm next steps. Go to [www.buildliteracy.org](http://www.buildliteracy.org) for more information.

---

### **Do GED credential recipients earn as much as high school graduates?**

How do adults with a GED credential compare to high school dropouts or traditional high school graduates with respect to earnings? In 2008 GED Testing Service published a research study on economic and noneconomic outcomes for GED credential recipients. The study used National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL, 2003) data for analysis.

This study, along with other 2008 research studies, is available on the GED Testing Service website at [http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/gedts\\_research.htm](http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/gedts_research.htm). You can also find executive summaries of each study for quick reference in the future. Feel free to download the PDF copies of the studies or their executive summaries. For more information contact Margaret Patterson, GED Testing Service Director of Research and Psychometrics, at [margaret\\_patterson@ace.nche.edu](mailto:margaret_patterson@ace.nche.edu).

---

## Correctional Education Association Plans Two Meetings

The theme of the Correctional Education Association's 2009 Leadership Forum is *Education is Change for the Future*; Tom Blomberg, John Linton, and Tracy Eisenhower are some of the featured presenters. The meeting runs from March 27 – 31 in Annapolis, MD. In the summer, CEA will hold its 2009 Annual Conference, *Moving Forward: Focusing on the Future*, from July 19 to 22 in Madison, Wisconsin. CEA has called for presenters to submit workshop abstracts by April 15. For information about the events, visit [www.ceanational.org](http://www.ceanational.org).

---

## New Jersey to Hold First Statewide Health Literacy Summit

Health, medical, literacy and policy professionals will gather Friday, April 3 at Burlington County College to explore the need for a statewide coalition to address health literacy. Andrew Pleasant of Rutgers University will open the conference followed by a panel that includes Michele Erikson of Wisconsin Literacy and Marty Finsterbush of VALUE. For more information, please contact Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey, 908-203-4582.

### Coalition Events Coming Up

- |                  |                                                 |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <i>May 7:</i>    | Membership Meeting, Washington, DC              |
| <i>May 19:</i>   | Dollar General Presentation Series, Jackson, MS |
| <i>Sept. 16:</i> | Literacy Leadership Awards                      |
| <i>Sept. 17:</i> | Membership Meeting, Washington, DC              |
| <i>Dec. 2:</i>   | Policy Forum, Washington, DC                    |
| <i>Dec. 3:</i>   | Membership Meeting, Washington, DC              |

### Upcoming Adult Literacy Events

- |                     |                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Feb. 22-23:</i>  | NAASLN Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference, Access to the Workforce for Adult Learners with AD/HD and Asperger's Syndrome, Marriottsville, MD |
| <i>Mar. 1-3:</i>    | National Center for Family Literacy, Conference, Orlando, FL                                                                               |
| <i>Mar. 25 -29:</i> | TESOL Convention, Uncharted Mountains, Forging New Pathways, Denver, CO                                                                    |

<b>Mar. 27 -31:</b>	CEA Leadership Forum, Annapolis, MD
<b>Apr. 7:</b>	ALA and NIFL, Virtual Library Literacy Summit
<b>Apr. 18-22:</b>	COABE, Annual Conference, Louisville, KY
<b>July 9-15:</b>	ALA, Annual Conference, Chicago, IL
<b>July 19-22:</b>	CEA, Annual Conference, Madison, WI
<b>Nov. 1-6:</b>	AAACE, Annual Conference, Cleveland, OH

*If you would like to list your event or meeting here, please send information to Jennifer Maloney at [Jennifer.maloney@ncldc.net](mailto:Jennifer.maloney@ncldc.net) by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month.*



Visiting the Senate: front - Sherrie Claiborne. First row - Heidi Silver-Pacuilla, Noreen Lopez, Lynn Selmsler, Barb Van Horn. Second row - Lennox McLendon, Geri Mulligan, Jackie Taylor, John Segota, Jean Stephens, Marsha Tait, David Harvey.

### ***Public Policy Corner***

Since my last column, there has been a flurry of activities involving members of the Coalition and our efforts on behalf of adult education and family literacy. Congress also

completed work on H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (stimulus bill).

In addition to our earlier letter to Congress regarding the need to provide funds for adult education in the stimulus bill, we forwarded a second letter to further express the need for funding for our programs. ProLiteracy assisted the Coalition in this effort by faxing the letter to the Hill. [A copy of this letter is attached for your review.](#) We also co-signed a letter with a wide-range of organizations, including the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Council of La Raza, the NAACP, several members of the Coalition, and others in support of an amendment to the House stimulus bill sponsored by Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) ([see attached](#)). This amendment would have added funding to address the job training and education needs of English language learners and farm workers, including \$250 million for adult education, with a priority on programs that provide English as a second language services. Unfortunately, the rule governing deliberation of the stimulus bill did not allow for consideration of the Grijalva amendment.

In the end, language was included in Title XIV of H.R. 1, the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, which provides \$53,600,000,000 for activities administered by the Department of Education. Section 14003 of this title outlines the purposes for which local educational agencies receiving funds can use them, including activities authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

We have heard there may be additional opportunities for adult education to receive funding through H.R. 1 and are continuing to work our way through this huge document to find any other hidden provisions.

In early February, prior to our membership meeting, Coalition members turned out in large numbers to meet with the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) to share our ideas for revising the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. It was a good meeting, with key Coalition members discussing critical parts of our proposal. We were told the HELP Committee would like to have a proposal for revising the Workforce Investment Act ready sometime in the summer. There was a strong indication that they would like to focus on efforts to help economic recovery and to see how our programs will fit into that effort. We explained our interest in creating career pathways as an option for adult education participants with employment related goals, but stressed that we did not want to lose some of the other priorities for adult education that were not job related, such as helping parents learn to read to their children and helping new Americans learn English.

On February 11, several coalition members met with Adrienne Dunbar with the House Education and Labor Committee to share the Coalition proposal. At this point, there is no set plan for considering WIA reauthorization legislation.

The Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness did, however, hold its first hearing on WIA entitled, "New Innovations and Best Practices Under the Workforce Investment Act," on February 12, 2009. Additional hearings are expected. For proceedings, go to <http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/labor/competitive-workforce/>

We will continue to meet with key Congressional staff to share the NCL reauthorization proposal in the next few weeks. We also forwarded copies of the Coalition proposal to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the National Institute for Literacy for review.

The Coalition's proposal and major issues documents discussing our six priorities for the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress will be available on the NCL website shortly.

Lynn Selmser

Visit the National Coalition for Literacy's website for more information.

<http://www.national-coalition-literacy.org/>