



Mayor's Office of Adult Education

Deputy Mayor Walcott Delivers Keynote Address at "Summit on the Future of Adult Education in New York City"

Interagency Collaborations Help Individuals in Adult Education Programs Move Toward Sustainability and Self Sufficiency

Deputy Mayor for Education and Community Development Dennis M. Walcott delivered the keynote address today at the Summit on the Future of Education in New York City held at the UJA- Federation in Manhattan. The Summit, sponsored by the Mayor's Office of Adult Education (MOAE) brought together adult education providers, job developers, city and state officials, teachers, and adult literacy students to hear about the Administration's efforts at providing those who have limited literacy and language skills with the tools to help them become self-sufficient and economically independent.

"Improving adults' literacy and language skills will facilitate many of the Administration's key reforms around poverty reduction," said Deputy Mayor Walcott. "We're engaging the adult education system in a large-scale reform designed to articulate a vision for the future - one in which we work together in new and more effective ways, leveraging new resources and partners to improve the lives of New York City families."

MOAE brought together students, teachers, adult education agencies, and public and private stakeholders through a series of meetings and retreats in order to create a vision for the future of education in New York City. A six-month strategic planning process - conducted by MOAE - which included input from these stakeholders through surveys, interviews, e-mails and letters to the Mayor showed that poverty rates among adults who never completed high school and/or cannot speak English are three times higher than for English speaking adults who have completed high school. Additionally, low literacy is also associated with higher levels of crime - 70 percent of offenders are high school dropouts and at least half are functionally illiterate. Educational levels of parents are one of the strongest predictors of children's success in school. Literacy levels also have a major impact on health - people with lower reading abilities tend to have worse health status and poor health outcomes even when they receive medical care.

"The ability to read and write is crucial to living independently, and we are committed to helping those with limited literacy and language skills get to that point," said MOAE Executive Director Anthony Tassi. "By creating a new vision for the future, adult educators will be improving the lives of thousands of families throughout the City where high rates of illiteracy and lack of English skills act like a log jam holding back progress on other social priorities, such as reducing poverty, promoting public health, and helping people find better jobs."

In addition to working with a number of City agencies, MOAE will also work with a range of State and federal agencies to enhance adult education programs. Among its initial priorities, MOAE will focus on strengthening educational services for inmates on Rikers Island and to ex-offenders upon re-entry into the community. New educational television programming - intended to reach hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers - will also be created to strengthen the impact

and expand the reach of adult education programs. MOAE also focuses on Health Literacy by providing the field with innovative programming, resources, and partnerships to improve the health of New York City adults by improving their literacy skills.

Deputy Mayor Walcott also stressed the importance of six core values for the future of adult education: recognizing the diversity of New York City, MOAE programs continue to be a force for social change in the inclusion of adult learners into mainstream society; using resources to connect learners to GED, ESL, college and workforce development programs; leveraging networks and non-traditional resources that allow for strengthened practices and specialization among providers; adhering to best practices - sticking to programs that continuously produce measurable outcomes; professionalization of the field - involving professionals from other disciplines who combine their areas of specialization with a focus on adult literacy; and lastly, accountability - collecting and using data to test effectiveness of programs.

The Mayor's Office of Adult Education

Mayor Bloomberg created the Office of Adult Education in October 2006 to focus on producing better outcomes for the City's adult education system. MOAE coordinates strategy, promotes best practices, and connects participating agencies to the Administration's education, community development, and health and human service priorities. Working with a variety of City agencies including the Department of Youth and Community Development, Human Resources Administration, Department of Education, Department of Correction, City University of New York, the Center for Economic Opportunity, as well as the Brooklyn, New York and Queens Public Libraries, the Office will collaborate on the expansion and development of adult educational opportunities throughout the five boroughs.

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