



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
H. Martin Lancaster, President

February 26, 2001

TO: Basic Skills Directors

FROM: Linda Ray
Basic Skills Training Specialist

REF: DOT Contacts

This memo supercedes any other I sent to any of you regarding the DOT assessment and potential programming that we have been discussing for months. I now have the correct information, and we should be ready to roll.

As most of you know, we were contacted last summer by DOT to do random testing across the state to determine the needs for Basic Skills programming. This is the first step in their Literacy Improvement Opportunity (LIMO) program to help their employees with basic skills. After this program gets off the ground, they will look at other programs throughout the community colleges for all their employees. A summary of the report we sent to DOT is attached.

DOT is interested in you presenting all your programming to the attached list of training coordinators. That includes generic Basic Skills, customized workplace programs that you can help develop, and ESL. Therefore, introduce everything you do to DOT. Please let me know if you would like us to develop statewide curriculum for this program.

Attached is a list of Division Training Coordinators with phone numbers for you to contact. These people know about the program and should not be surprised to hear from you. If you have any problems, please let me know immediately, and I will contact them as well. DOT, from the Secretary down, is in complete agreement that this program should become a large statewide effort and will support it totally. Also attached are the DOT Literacy Improvement Opportunity Assessment Results and NCDOT Literacy Improvement Opportunity Policy.

Please let me know what is happening in your program. I appreciate your time and efforts. You are the best people in the world, and I want to show that to DOT. Our hope is to create a best practice partnership between state agencies that others will want to replicate across the United States. Any questions? Just call me!

Attachments

cc: Presidents
Senior Continuing Education Administrators

CC01-047
E-mail Copy

MAILING ADDRESS: 5024 MAIL SERVICE CENTER ~ RALEIGH, NC 27699-5024

Street Address: 200 West Jones ~ Raleigh, NC 27603-1379 ~ 919-733-7051 ~ Fax 919-733-0680

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

DOT Contacts

Please contact the DOT Division Representative that corresponds with your school.

Division 1

DOT Contact: Traude Faircloth (252) 482-7977

College of the Albemarle (Ryane Whitehurst)
Martin CC (Jean Daniels)
Roanoke-Chowan CC (Michele Meisheid)

Division 2

DOT Contact: Jennifer Evans (252) 830-3490

Beaufort County CC (Tony Taylor)
Carteret CC (Vada Palma)
Craven CC (Debra Smith)
Lenoir CC (Joyce Bryant)
Pamlico CC (Glenn DeMunk)
Pitt CC (Lou Ann Rasberry)

Division 3

DOT Contact: Steve Taylor (910) 251-2693

Brunswick CC (Sabra Barfield)
Cape Fear CC (Holly Tucker)
Coastal Carolina CC (Paula Lanvermeier)
James Sprunt CC (Rebecca Oliver)
Sampson CC (Billie Crawford Eure)

Division 4

DOT Contact: Sandy Tharrington (252) 237-6164, ext. 2101

Edgecombe CC (Phillip Brown)
Halifax CC (Mary Hutchinson)
Johnston CC (Kim Wiggs Gamlin)
Nash CC (Linda Battle)
Wayne CC (Sonja Redmon)
Wilson TCC (Robert Holsten)

Division 5

DOT Contact: Terri-Lynne Poppe (252) 438-8410

Durham TCC (Russ Conley)

Piedmont CC (Debra Harlow)

Vance-Granville CC (Sue Grissom/George Henderson)

Wake TCC (Lourdes Shelley)

Division 6

DOT Contact: Tom Hay (910) 486-1493

Bladen CC (Thomas Rains, Jr.)

Fayetteville TCC (Carrie Heffney)

Robeson CC (Vicki Tate)

Southeastern CC (Beverlee Nance)

Division 7

DOT Contact: Patty Eason (336) 334-3192

Alamance CC (Suellyn Dalton)

Guilford TCC (Pat Freeman)

Rockingham CC (Joy Chappell)

Division 8

DOT Contact: Alease Fowler (910) 944-2344

Central Carolina CC (Donald Buie)

Montgomery CC (Michelle Boyd)

Randolph CC (Becky Megerian)

Richmond CC (Lee Opata)

Sandhills CC (Martha Bergman)

Division 9

DOT Contact: Mike Patton (336) 631-1340

Davidson County CC (Pat Phillips)

Forsyth TCC (Michael Harris)

Rowan-Cabarrus CC (Jeannie Moore)

Division 10

DOT Contact: Alden Whitmore (704) 982-0101

Central Piedmont CC (Bobby Sutton)

South Piedmont CC (Denise Wilson)

Stanly CC (Kathy Gardner)

Division 11

DOT Contact: Shannon Billings (336) 903-9118

Caldwell CC (Martha Hollar)

Mayland CC (Louise Hembree)

Surry CC (Virginia Shaw)

Wilkes CC (Diane Harper)

Division 12

DOT Contact: Caroline Dedmon (704) 480-5402

Catawba Valley CC (Sandie Loyer)

Cleveland CC (Jan Neal)

Gaston College (Allen Chambers)

Mitchell CC (Carol Johnson)

Division 13

DOT Contact: Ken Putnam (828) 251-6176

Rita Rhymer (828) 251-6174

Asheville-Buncombe TCC (Sue Olesiuk)

Isothermal CC (Mary Ann Head)

McDowell TCC (Shelba Murray)

Western Piedmont CC (Virginia Davis)

Division 14

DOT Contact: Larry Dehart (828) 586-2141

Blue Ridge CC (Rick Marshall)

Haywood CC (Deborah Gaddy)

Southwestern CC (Joan Moulton)

Tri-County CC (Barbara Smith)

Department of Transportation

Literacy Improvement Opportunity Assessment Results

August – December, 2000

Project Overview

The Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) directed his staff to develop a program that would afford all DOT employees the opportunity to improve their literacy level. The primary step in this process was to determine what DOT's literacy levels were. The Department partnered with the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) to conduct an assessment of basic skills in reading for a random sampling of DOT employees across the state. Testing was conducted in three targeted areas: The Division of Motor Vehicles (statewide, random selection), Century Center (located in Raleigh and is a central planning and design location, random selection), and the field (all employees in three counties in one Division, spans urban and rural areas, encompasses nearly all work specialties). The assessment was conducted beginning in August and finishing in November, 2000. The results are found in Attachment 1.

It should be noted that while the testing results reflect similar results to the National Adult Literacy Survey of 1992, we found there are areas that require more attention than others. One county's results showed that 50% of the testees fell in categories that should have assistance.

The assessment used to test the reading skills of these employees was the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), Employment Competency Skills Appraisal. It is a competency-based test with critical thinking skills a key factor. It is designed to determine the level at which a person can undertake employment based reading and apply it appropriately. The levels range from being unable to read to a high school graduate level of reading.

The appraisal is just the first level of assessment. It gives the assessor a good understanding of where the testees' overall reading skills might be. However, after an appraisal, another longer assessment is usually given to further understand what types of sub-skills a student is missing under the reading umbrella. With DOT, this will occur when classes are developed and students sign up to attend. The appraisal was used for the random assessment so that we could get an idea of where classes are needed. It will be much less intimidating for the employees to test again with the longer version when they have spoken confidentially with an instructor and are ready to begin the classes.

Educational Functioning Level Descriptions

The measures (levels) that appear in the DOT quantitative report attached come from the National Reporting System for Adult Education as devised by the U. S. Department of Education. In the DOT assessment, skill levels ranged from "High Adult Secondary" to

“Beginning ABE (Adult Basic Education) Literacy.” Attachment 2 shows the National Reporting System’s descriptors for each of these levels.

NCCCS’s concerns would be for those employees who fall anywhere from the “High Intermediate” range to “Beginning ABE Literacy.” Those people are functioning at or below 9th grade level. However, those that are functioning at the “Low Adult Secondary” level are still functioning at a beginning high school level. Among those at “High Adult Secondary,” some may need minor remediation or brush-ups on their skills. The measures in Basic Skills assessment do not go higher than advanced high school level.

Recommendations

As predicted by the DOT Literacy Committee, the primary area to concentrate on appears to be among field employees although DMV also shows a need for basic skills classes as evidenced by having two employees fall in the “Beginning ABE Literacy” level.

NCCCS recommends beginning with the field employees of DOT to set up basic skills enhancement classes. We have been provided names and contact information for managers who would have decision-making capabilities so that our coordinators can meet with them first to discuss the organization and timing of such classes. In other words, we need to have top-down approval and support for the classes to be successful. NCCCS will provide our local coordinators these names and will make direct contact with them before the end of the year.

It should be noted that DOT has published a Department policy (Attachment 3) that covers this effort. This policy establishes a network of local DOT literacy coordinators who are currently being selected. NCCCS coordinators will also work closely with these coordinators as well as the managers.

Although general classes can begin as soon as all involved feel it is appropriate, we suggest that our coordinators talk with these DOT managers about the possibility of developing customized curricula, i.e., something as simple as on-the-job vocabulary words to something as detailed as rewriting an important DOT document necessary for most employees to understand to make the language easier to understand. Lesson plans could also be written to cover any workplace material managers and students need to function (i.e., reading street signs and understanding area maps). If customized instruction is deemed appropriate, NCCCS will underwrite any curriculum development and will supervise the development so that it is consistent across the state.

NCCCS recommends that DOT survey your department employees as to the need for or interest in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. In the assessment process we did encounter four or five people, mostly higher level employees, who struggled with reading. We have found, in most cases of higher educated non-native English speakers, that reading and writing the English language is sometimes a problem. They learn to speak in classes, but have trouble translating language to reading and writing. There are classes we can work with our colleges

to develop that can help ESL employees, but we feel you would need to survey to discover the interest in such classes.

Along these same lines, as the Basic Skills classes begin to develop and we determine the success of this endeavor, we would encourage DOT to survey employees who perhaps do not need basic skills as to what types of training they might like. You might handle quite a bit of training within your organization, but the continuing education and curriculum arms of the community colleges would certainly have offerings you might be interested in either holding on site or sending your people to a college class. NCCCS would be glad to help with the development of a “courses of study” catalog specific to DOT to hand to employees offering them the chance to better themselves educationally and on-the-job.

Finally, NCCCS is pleased to offer this report to DOT and feels honored to begin such a distinguished partnership between two state agencies. We are certainly glad to help in any way we can.