



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
Dr. R. Scott Ralls, President

October 8, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Basic Skills Directors

FROM: Randy Whitfield, Ed.D
Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Services
Basic Skills Department

SUBJECT: Ability to Benefit Clause

The Basic Skills State Leadership Advisory Board recommended that Basic Skills draft an “ability to benefit” clause to address the issue of students who are trying to enroll or are enrolled in Basic Skills classes, but are unable to function in an educational setting and cannot make any progress on standardized assessments. To address this issue, the Basic Skills Advisory Board developed the attached “ability to benefit” document which some local programs may want to adopt.

This is not being implemented statewide; rather, it was developed for those local programs who might want to use it or adapt it to their needs. The System Office General Counsel, Q. Shante Martin, has reviewed and approved of the policy. If your program decides to use it, you should have your college’s counsel review it as well.

Please contact me at whitfieldr@nccommunitycolleges.edu or 919-807-7132 if you have any questions.

Attachment

c: Presidents
Senior Continuing Education Administrators

CC08-225
Paper & Email Copies

Ability to Benefit

The Basic Skills State Leadership Advisory Board has drafted an "Ability to Benefit" clause which is recommended for use by local community colleges.

The _____ Community College Name _____ Basic Skills program is an educational program for adults, *16 years old or older and out of school, who do not have a high school diploma or those who have a high school diploma or equivalency, but are functioning below the high school level. All interested participants must demonstrate the ability to benefit from the program by being able to take one of the following pre-tests _____. (*The college will list any test or tests they use which are approved by the United States Department of Education.*) Students unable to complete the pre-test will be admitted to the program at a future date once they are able to complete the pre-test.

An outcome for students participating in a Basic Skills program, according to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, is to have demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.

Students who do not make progress on Basic Skills tests approved by the United States Department of Education after ** two years will be dropped from the program or referred to more appropriate agencies. (*The college will list the time that it will allow students to stay in the program and not make progress – it takes a minimum of two years for many Compensatory Education students to make progress.*)

*Compensatory Education students must be at least 17 years old.

** The college selects the number of years; however, since Compensatory Education students often do not make progress until two years of study, the Basic Skills State Leadership Advisory Board recommends a minimum of two years before dropping students.