

**Overview**  
**The Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG) in the**  
**South Bay Adult Education Consortium**

**Development of a Regional Three-Year Plan for Adult Education**

The Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG) began in 2013, when the California Legislature passed AB86, the Adult Education Consortium Planning Grant. The purpose of AB86 adult education legislation was to improve the delivery of adult education by forming consortia to create a dual delivery system between community colleges and k-12 adult education programs. Consortia members are defined as adult education providers within the community college boundaries.

AB 86 called for the development of regional consortia to improve adult education in five areas:

1. Elementary and secondary basic skills, including classes required for a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate
2. Classes and course for immigrants eligible for education services in citizenship and English as a second language and workforce preparation classes in basic skills
3. Education programs for adults with disabilities
4. Short-term career technical education programs with high employment potential
5. Programs for apprentices

The South Bay Adult Education Consortium (SBAEC) is a collaborative of three South County educational districts committed to strengthening and enhancing adult learner access, persistence and success in the higher education pipeline: Southwestern Community College District (SWC); Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD); and Coronado Unified School District (CUSD). SBAEC is one of 71 consortia across California.

Consortia were required to develop a three-year plan for adult education in the region. A steering committee made up of representatives from SWC, SUHSD and CUSD met to develop the planning activities and provide input into plan strategies and priorities.

Planning activities included:

- An inventory and analysis of existing adult education and college program offerings.
- Focus groups of representatives of the Consortium members that identified gaps and potential strategies to address the gaps.
- Student roundtables to obtain student input.
- Three community forums. A core group of partners participated in planning the Regional Adult Education Plan, including the San Diego Workforce Investment Board/San Diego Workforce Partnership; the South County Career Center; the San Diego County Public Library System; San Diego Job Corps; the San Diego Council on Literacy; and the California Department of Rehabilitation.

The three-year plan laid out goals, objectives and strategies to coordinate and enhance adult education in the region. The original SBAEC three-year plan is available online at <http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia> (click on Southwestern/South Bay on map).

The Legislature passed AB104 in 2015, which created the Adult Education Block Grant by consolidating funding for implementation of adult education plans into single regional block grants. The five program areas under AB86 became seven and were defined as follows:

1. Programs in elementary and secondary skills, including those leading to a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate.
2. Programs for immigrants in citizenship, ESL, and workforce preparation.
3. Programs for adults, including, but not limited to, older adults, that are primarily related to entry or reentry into the workforce.
4. Programs for adults, including, but not limited to, older adults, that are primarily designed to develop knowledge and skills to assist elementary and secondary school children to succeed academically in school.
5. Programs for adults with disabilities.
6. Programs in career technical education that are short term in nature with high employment potential.
7. Programs offering pre-apprenticeship training conducted in coordination with one or more apprenticeship programs approved by the Division of Apprenticeship Standards.

Consortia were required to update their three-year plan to address the program areas included in AB 104. A summary of the SBAEC's strategies to address the seven program areas in AB104 can be found at <http://southbayadulthood.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Three-Year-Plan-Update-Executive-Summary.pdf>

### **Differences in the Adult Education Programs of the Consortium Members at the Start of AEBG**

Enrollment. In FY 2013-14,

- SUHSD served 7,654 students in elementary and basic skills education, 7,287 in ESL and classes for immigrants, 5,871 in short-term CTE, and 19 students in apprenticeship programs, for a total of 20,831 students (unduplicated count). This was down almost 16% from the prior year (2012-13), when SUHSD served a total of 24,738 students.
- SWC served 6,278 students in elementary and basic skills education (in credit classes), 915 in ESL (most in credit classes), and 750 students in short-term CTE courses, for a total of 7,943 students.
- CUSD served 22 students in adult education ESL classes and 7 students in basic skills education, for a total of 29 students.

None of the Consortium members provided education programs specifically for students with disabilities, although SWC did offer support services for students with disabilities.

The plan noted that program access at SUHSD had become much more difficult for students: 2013-14 enrollment in elementary and secondary education was down 25% from its high in 2008-09; 2013-14 enrollment in ESL was down 35% from 2008-09, and 2013-14 enrollment in short-term CTE courses was down 46% from 2008-09.

Programmatic differences. Several significant differences between the members were noted during the planning process:

- *Minimum qualifications for teaching:* The credential requirements established by the state to teach in Adult Education and the community college are different.
  - SUHSD and CUSD: teachers must have an Adult Education Credential (the Adult Designated Subjects credential and CTE credential), Single-Subject Credential in the course area or Multiple-Subject Credential.
  - SWC: faculty members must have a Master’s degree in most areas; in some CTE programs industry experience or other vocational-area experience is required to teach.
- *Basic skill assessment:* Each member used different tests to assess students’ skills at the start of the program and to assess learning.
  - SUHSD used the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to assess competency and progress within reading, English and math; CASAS to measure basic skills, English language acquisition and literacy skills; and an internally-developed math assessment.
  - CUSD integrated assessment within its courses.
  - SWC used College Tests for English Placement, and the California Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project Algebra Readiness Test.

To assess student learning in classes, SUHSD used the TABE and CASAS, while SWC used in-course assessments to gauge whether students were achieving the Student Learning Outcomes established for each course. CUSD used in-course assessments.

- *Alignment:* SUHSD adult CTE programs articulated to SWC credit CTE courses. However, there was no alignment of SUHSD adult and SWC noncredit ABE or ESL programs, and SWC noncredit programs did not align to any SWC credit programs.
- *Reporting:* SUHSD used TOPSpro to report on student enrollments; SWC used the state’s MIS system. SWC did not have any way to identify which of their students had come from adult education, or to track students through their noncredit program.

A much more extensive description of the gaps identified may be found in the three-year plan.

Differences in adult education/noncredit funding. The planning team noted a significant difference in the way K-12 adult education and community college noncredit programs are funded:

- Community colleges are funded based on the number of students present in classes during specified times of each semester. Each college has a state-set cap on the total number of full-time equivalent students (FTES) for which it can receive funding, but

most colleges (including SWC) have been below their cap in recent years. This means that the college can receive additional funding if it enrolls more students in additional courses. Colleges must be careful to fill classes, as they are funded per student and may not receive enough funding to cover their costs if a minimum number of students do not enroll in each course. Community college noncredit courses used to receive only 60-70% of the funding that credit courses received. In 2014 the state equalized the funding for college and career-preparation noncredit courses, providing the same level of funding that they receive for credit courses. However, noncredit classes that do not lead to a certificate (currently the majority of noncredit courses at SWC) still receive the lower funding amount.

- K-12 adult education programs receive their program funding up-front from the state of California. School districts have to decide how they will spend the funding they receive; they do not earn more if they serve more students. The K-12 Adult Education funding model used to be similar to that of the community colleges before the state moved to Flexibility funding in 2009 (which relaxed requirements on categorical funding) and then AEBG in 2013. The challenge for K-12 districts is that the costs of providing adult education increase annually (due to salary increases, increased in the cost of health insurance and other fringe benefits, rising electricity rates, etc.). When funding remains level (as it has with AEBG), the district cannot offer as many classes as it had before costs increased. This challenge has had a significant impact on SUHSD during the first three years of the AEBG:
  - Year 1 (2015-2016): SUHSD Board of Trustees provided funding for increases in Adult Education teacher salaries and fringe benefits through the district's general fund.
  - Year 2 (2016-2017): SUHSD Board of Trustees continued to support the adult education program by paying for the parenting classes and ongoing coverage of the 2015-2016 salary increases. Due to rising fringe benefit costs and additional bargained 2016-2017 salary increases, the adult program's costs continued to rise beyond the scope covered by AEBG funding and the initial commitments of the Trustees. Additional costs were covered by the SUHSD general fund. SUHSD reduced adult education offerings by 5% in December 2016 in an effort to reduce the impact of cost increases.
  - Year 3 (2017-2018): In an effort to further reduce cost overruns resulting from rising costs, SUHSD adult reduced class offerings by an additional 10%. The SUHSD Board of Trustees remains committed to providing the parenting classes and providing for the ongoing costs of the 2015-2016 salary increases. Even with classroom reductions and these commitments, it is still expected that the adult education program will require additional support from the general fund in 2017-2018.

State funding allocations to the individual consortia may change starting in 2019-2020, based on each consortium's 2017-2018 performance data.

## Funding History

### *Year 1: 2015-2016*

Implementation funding. In 2015-2016, the state provided two types of adult education implementation funding. First, each K-12 adult education provider received *Maintenance of Effort* (MOE) funding (based on their 2011-2012 expenditures in the five AEBG program areas). Expenditures in adult education program areas not included in AB86 (such as Parent Education) were not included in the calculation of MOE. Second, in 2015-16 the state also provided new *AB86 implementation funding*, and allocated funding to consortia based on community need (using data such as local poverty rates and educational attainment).

The SBAEC allocated its implementation funding across the three members based on their estimated costs to implement the three-year plan activities. The SBAEC also created a consortium-level budget (housed by the fiscal agent) to pay for the consortium Project Director and Administrative Assistant, and for consortium-wide activities such as marketing and faculty workgroups.

Data and Accountability Funding. In 2015-2016 the state also provided one-time awards of Data and Accountability funding to improve AEBG data collection practices. Data and Accountability funds were disbursed to consortia in June 2016.

Indirect. Each Consortium identified a fiscal agent for the funding; the SBAEC chose SWC to be the fiscal agent for the 2015-16 grant. As the fiscal agent SWC also received indirect cost funding to compensate for the accounting and reporting costs of serving as the fiscal agent. In 2015-2016 SWC shared a portion of the consortium's indirect funding with SUHSD and CUSD.

As the consortium fiscal agent, SWC disbursed each member's allocation of the implementation funding based on the budget submitted with the three-year plan. State disbursement of funds was delayed until November/December 2015 and MOUs were not signed until May 2016, slowing the start of the implementation process. Each member has about 2.5 years to spend the 2015-2016 funding (until December 2017). Each new year of funding has its own 2.5-year expenditure term.

AB104 states that each member is entitled to receive the same amount of implementation funding that they had received in the previous year, so the amount of funding allocated to each Member in Year 1 (2015-16) will remain constant with each budget year.

### *Year 2: 2016-2017*

In 2016-2017, AEBG funding was consolidated further; no distinction was made between MOE and Implementation funds. The Consortium members agreed that SUHSD would be the fiscal agent for the consolidated funds, and the Consortium-wide staff and budget were housed at SUHSD. There was a slight increase in the SBAEC's award due to a statewide funding redistribution after two consortia decided to consolidate their operations. The increased funding was allocated to the consortium budget. Each member has 2.5 years to spend these 2016-17 funds (through December 2018).

**Year 3: 2017-2018**

In 2017-2018, the statewide AEBG funding level remained the same as in 2016-2017. SUHSD is the fiscal agent for the Consortium, and the Consortium staff and budget remain housed at SUHSD. SUHSD has reduced the amount it takes for indirect, further increasing the implementation funds at the consortium level. Each member has 2.5 years to spend these funds (through December 2019).

AEBG funding by member is presented in Table 1 below:

<b>Table 1: SBAEC Funding by Member, 2015-16 to 2017-18</b>					
2015-2016 AEBG Funding Type	SUHSD	SWC	CUSD	Consortium/ Fiscal Agent	Total
Implementation	\$12,661,094	\$435,647	\$216,001	\$294,842	\$13,607,584
Data & Accountability	\$148,650	\$138,708	\$28,700	N/A	\$316,058
Indirect	\$28,700	N/A	\$2,659	\$31,359	\$62,718
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,838,444</b>	<b>\$574,355</b>	<b>\$247,360</b>	<b>\$326,201</b>	<b>\$13,986,360</b>
2016-2017 AEBG Funding Type	SUHSD	SWC	CUSD	Consortium/ Fiscal Agent	Total
Implementation	\$12,661,094	\$440,305	\$216,001	\$316,003	\$13,633,403
Indirect	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$95,532	\$95,532
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,661,094</b>	<b>\$440,305</b>	<b>\$216,001</b>	<b>\$411,535</b>	<b>\$13,728,935</b>
2017-2018 AEBG Funding Type	SUHSD	SWC	CUSD	Consortium/ Fiscal Agent	Total
Implementation	\$12,661,094	\$440,305	\$216,001	\$388,210	\$13,705,610
Indirect	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$23,325	\$23,325
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,661,094</b>	<b>\$440,305</b>	<b>\$216,001</b>	<b>\$411,535</b>	<b>\$13,728,935</b>

Future funding tied to performance. Funding was not tied to performance during the first three years of funding for AEBG. The state has released preliminary notice of AEBG funding for 2018-2019, and the SBAEC funding remains the same at \$13,728,935. State legislators, the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) will work together to analyze the 2017-2018 performance data for each Consortium, and plan to redistribute 2019-2020 AEBG funds across the consortia statewide based on performance.

## **Challenges in the Collection of Performance Data**

Implementation of AEBG has presented significant challenges in data collection and management, both locally and statewide.

### ***Year 1: 2015-2016***

In 2015-16 the state had not yet developed AEBG data performance measures. Each consortium across the state was instructed to report data using local definitions for data elements. However, data definitions varied across the members of each consortium and across consortia. For example, the definition of student completion in SUHSD differed from student completion in CUSD, which differed from student completion in SWC, which differed from student completion in Los Angeles, San Francisco, etc. This made it impossible for the AEBG office to compile meaningful 2015-2016 data for their annual AEBG report to the Legislature.

### ***Year 2: 2016-2017***

In 2016-2017, the state decided to require Consortia to report AEBG data using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) data metrics (regardless of member participation in WIOA). Each member was required to use TOPSpro and implement CASAS testing, again regardless of whether they participated in WIOA. The inclusion of CTE in the reporting requirements skewed the data because WIOA metrics were not designed to include CTE. The AEBG office was able to compile data for their report to the Legislature, but the data did not accurately reflect what is happening in the field, due to the mismatch between WIOA and CTE.

In 2016-2017, the state also implemented a requirement that Consortia report data only on students in courses funded by AEBG. SWC could not use AEBG funding to fund noncredit courses that are eligible to collect apportionment funding. In addition, unlike in the three-year plan, the state did not count SWC credit courses in basic skills toward AEBG totals in Year 2 (unless they were AEBG-funded). AEBG funds could be used to pay for equipment, books, and supplies, but noncredit courses were designed to minimize these costs. This meant that SWC (and other community colleges across the state) had to report significantly reduced enrollment in Year 2 (2016-2017).

### ***Year 3: 2017-2018***

The state has announced a major revamping of AEBG data metrics for 2017-2018. The state has changed the way AEBG can fund college courses in Year 3 (2017-2018), so more courses can be counted. The state requirement that all consortium members report data using TOPSpro will change in 2018-2019, when community colleges will be allowed to use their MIS system to report their AEBG data. The AEBG Office will conduct intensive statewide training on the performance metrics and data collection during fall 2017.

## **Next Steps**

Each Consortium member has developed new courses and curriculum for the adult education and noncredit programs. It can take up to two years for the community college to develop a new course and obtain state approval; SWC has developed new noncredit courses in ESL, basic skills and CTE that have been approved and can be offered starting in fall 2017.

AEBG is one of many initiatives that community colleges participate in to strengthen the California workforce. The state has started to fund community college CTE program expansion and improvement through the Strong Workforce Program, which may include noncredit CTE programs. SWC also utilizes noncredit Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) funding to bolster student support services. Community colleges around the state are able to braid these funding streams to create a strong infrastructure to support adult education.

Program alignment has been the central focus of the faculty workgroups that have been meeting over the past two years. These workgroups have refined existing strategies and recommended new activities to meet the goals and objectives of the three-year plan.

In fall 2017 SUHSD is opening Workability II classes for students with disabilities.

SWC has developed a new noncredit application that includes a student identifier to facilitate student tracking. Each Consortium member is working to improve their student data collection processes and is learning the statewide data systems.

The Advisory Committee has reviewed the progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the three-year plan, and is working to maximize student access to adult education and noncredit courses throughout the South Bay region.

The Advisory Committee anticipates that a new three-year plan must be developed and submitted to the state some time in 2018.