**Rendezvous**

09

Statistical Considerations

08

**Fall**

# A courtesy supplement for CAEPA colleagues, 2009

compiled by

Scott Baker CAEPA Public Relations Committee Chair

Program Administrator

Pine River Community Learning Center

Ignacio, Colorado

* Nationally, one in seven high school credentials earned now is a GED.[[1]](#endnote-1) More than 12 million Americans have earned their GED since 1942.
* “Ninety-three million people, or 45% of the American adult population, have literacy skills that place them below high school level… It is not only the good jobs that are out of their reach; this population is more than three times as likely to be arrested.”[[2]](#endnote-2)
* ProLiteracy estimates that total federal funding, combined with any state matching dollars and philanthropic donations, make it currently possible to educate only 3 million adults. The demand is believed to be more than 10 times that number—or by the NCAL (National Commission on Adult Literacy) survey, about 97% below parity.[[3]](#endnote-3) More than 90% of basic education, GED, and/or ESOL programs have waiting lists for classroom space or tutors.
* “Annual Medicare costs for adults with low literacy skills are more than 4 times greater than costs for others… altogether amounting to as much as $238 billion each year (enough to fund health insurance for every individual in the U.S.)”[[4]](#endnote-4)
* More than half of the inmates arriving in state and federal prisons are illiterate.[[5]](#endnote-5) The average drop in re-incarceration due to adult education (29%) is estimated to save $2.00 in corrections costs for every dollar spent on education.[[6]](#endnote-6)
* According to the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute, one in five families lack enough income to meet basic living expenses, despite each having at least one full-time worker; current federal policies recognize only a third of these households as “poor.” Critical Poverty Levels (twice the national average or more) occur especially in rural southeastern Colorado. Education, CFPI argues, is the central factor for wage-adequate employment.[[7]](#endnote-7)
* State of Colorado, Appropriations for Adult Education = $0.00 (48 of the 50 United States have allocated state funds).
* 20 states in the U.S. have defined “college readiness” policies, and 28 have articulated “work readiness,” as a means toward developing coherent educational solutions. Colorado is not among them.[[8]](#endnote-8)
* AEFLA (federal) funding to Colorado averages at about $361 annually per student; by contrast, allocations for public schools here approaches nearly $10,000 per student and community college tuition averages well above $4,000 per year. [[9]](#endnote-9)
* Colorado public schools in 2009 lost 27.3% of its graduating class, more than 17,000 students (National average, 30.8%--1.3 million altogether).[[10]](#endnote-10) For Colorado this translates to earnings in excess of $3.4 billion lost each year.[[11]](#endnote-11)
* ProLiteracy finds that nationally only 13 in 100 American high school drop-outs secure jobs.
* For people ages 25 to 34 in Colorado colleges, 40.2% complete an Associates Degree or higher; one implication being that virtually 60% are NOT completing—about 2 million enrollees, or more than half of all working adults.[[12]](#endnote-12) In another report based on 2003 completions, about a third of all Colorado post-secondary students drop out.[[13]](#endnote-13)
* The average remediation rate for college freshmen has held firm at 30%—and at two-year schools specifically, 53%.[[14]](#endnote-14) Remediation costs are believed to drain almost $28 billion from the state, and drive up student tuitions by $13 million.
* Total AEFLA learners in Colorado, 2007-08 = 14,683. The actual need, inferring from national percentiles cited by the National Commission on Adult Literacy, may put the figure at more than one and a half million adult Coloradans.



* In 2007 the nation’s GED section passing rate was 71.5%, while in Colorado it was 82.7%. In 2008, Colorado’s rate increased to 84.8% overall.
* The chief providers of adult education and family literacy in Colorado, under WIA II/AEFLA grants, are Community Based Organizations (CBO’s, 39%), Local Education Agencies (LEA’s, including school districts, 29%), and Community Colleges (23%).
* The Child Poverty rate in Colorado is 15.3%--the fastest growing in the country. Since 2000, Colorado has had a 116% increase in the number of its children living in families with incomes over halfway below the Federal Poverty Line.[[15]](#endnote-15)
* Half of the 2 millions immigrants entering the U.S. each year are not literate in their own languages.[[16]](#endnote-16) An estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants appear also to fit this pattern. In Colorado, more than 700,000 citizens speak a language other than English.[[17]](#endnote-17)
* Eighty percent of Colorado’s geography classifies as “rural”—home to about 20% of the population. USDA studies indicate that workers in rural areas earn about 23% less than their urban equivalents, and experience poverty rates about 15% higher; low-skill employment has been steadily declining, too, at rates twice that of metro areas.[[18]](#endnote-18)
* Colorado rural employers tend to import technical or professional staffing from outside their areas,[[19]](#endnote-19) leaving unskilled labor to locals—whose reliance on construction, conventional energy, and/or seasonal trades makes them especially vulnerable to market downturns.
* At the same time, what once offset the rural disadvantages are disappearing—a 2008 policy report shows, for example, that rural Colorado’s food costs have risen by 45% in the last 4 years, while wages have largely stagnated.[[20]](#endnote-20)

*Scott Baker may be reached at the Pine River Community Learning Center*

*(970) 563-0681,* [*sbaker@prclc.org*](mailto:sbaker@prclc.org)

1. Source: American Council on Education [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gayle B. Samuels. “Why I Teach GED Students” in *Education Week* [online version]. July 27, 2009. [www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/07/27/37samuels.h28.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/07/27/37samuels.h28.html) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. *Reach Higher, America: Overcoming Crisis in the U.S. Workforce.* June 2008. National Commission on Adult Literacy: Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Source: ProLiteracy. Refer also, the American Medical Association (low literate clients = $73 billion annually). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Source: ProLiteracy. First 100-day Plan for Adult Literacy in the U.S. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Steurer, S. et al. (2001) *Three State Recidivism Study*. Correctional Education Association, 63 pps. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. CFPI (2008) “Overlooked and Undercounted: Struggling to Make Ends Meet in Colorado.” [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Diplomas Count 2009: *Broader Horizons, The Challenge of College Readiness for All Students.* (2009) Colorado State Graduation Brief. EPE Research Center. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Source: Colorado Department of Education, Adult Education and Family Literacy division. See also College In Colorado, <http://www.collegeincolorado.org/Apply/Compare_Colleges/Undergrad_Compare_Colleges.aspx> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Colorado Children’s Campaign study: *Children At Risk*” 2007. <http://www.collegesummit.org/regions/colorado>. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Source: Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. 2008. U.S. Factfinder reports that nearly half a million or 12% Colorado adults have no HS diploma (includes about 82,000 between ages 18-24). About 700,000 adults (22% over age 25) have tried college but not been able to finish. Educational Attainment, 2007 Estimates (<http://Factfinder.census.gov>) [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2003. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Engdahl. Todd. (Dec. 2008). Colorado Commission on Higher Education brief. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Source: Colorado Center on Law and Policy. (2008) Fact Sheet: Poverty in Colorado [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Source: ProLiteracy [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Source: State of Colorado Demography Office. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. “Rural Labor and Education: Nonmetro Earnings and Low-Wage Workers” USDA Economic Research Service, 2007 [<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/LaborAndEducation/earnings.htm>] and “Education’s Role in the Metro-Nonmetro Earnings Divide” *Amber Waves*, Feb. 2008. USDA. “Assuming returns to educational attainment remain constant, if educational attainment in nonmetro areas were the same as in metro areas, nonmetro earnings would be more than 5 percentage points ($31 per week) higher, closing about one-fourth of the metro-nonmetro earnings gap.” <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/February08/Features/EducationRole.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. A noteworthy feature of Four Corners rural economies, collectively. *Rural Colorado – Real Colorado*, An Annual Report on the Status of Rural Colorado 2008. 14 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute, “Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2008: A Family Needs Budget” 1. (Averages for six selected counties show increases in healthcare-costs by 63% and childcare-costs by 27%) [↑](#endnote-ref-20)