

2026

California Adult Education Program Data and Accountability Workgroup Recommendations



CALIFORNIA ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM
DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY WORKGROUP
RECOMMENDATIONS

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Rationale

A decade ago, California invested in education programs for adults through the California Adult Education Program (CAEP). CAEP focuses on several distinct populations: English language learners and those seeking citizenship, people building foundational numeracy and literacy, those seeking a high school diploma or equivalency, workers seeking job training, adults with disabilities, and family members working to support the success of children. CAEP solidified a system where services are provided through K12 adult schools and noncredit community college programs, all organized through regional consortia.

At the time, there was no coherent data infrastructure to track the outcomes of adult education participants within K12 adult and community college noncredit programs, understand what happened after they transitioned from one institution to another, or follow their success in the workforce. While information was being collected, it was splintered between systems including CASAS TOPSpro Enterprise (TE) and the Chancellor's Office Management Information System (MIS). Therefore, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and the California Department of Education (CDE) convened a workgroup made up of K12 adult school and noncredit practitioners. Together, they mapped learners' journeys and developed requirements for a data system that would merge TE and MIS data. The new data set would provide information back to policy makers, practitioners, and the public through mechanisms like annual reports to the Legislature on the CAEP metrics and regional planning by consortia to drive continuous improvement.

California was able to build a data infrastructure unlike any in the country. Today, anyone can go to DataVista (https://datavista.cccco.edu/data_views/caep_score_card) and see eight years of data, sort it by program areas, disaggregate it by student characteristics, and compare outcomes across institutions or within consortia. The data have provided a strong foundation for planning and clarifying the ways that adult education is improving the lives of millions of Californians. Having visible data has also allowed practitioners to better pinpoint ways of measuring participant outcomes and how to construct the variables that drive the analytics.

This report reflects the work of a second practitioner workgroup convened by CCCCCO and CDE. Twenty-four field representatives from K12 adult schools, community college noncredit programs, and technical assistance providers met six times between September 2025 and March 2026. The group identified key data challenges and concerns about underlying information in existing databases. Under their guidance, research teams at CASAS and WestEd provided detailed documentation on data definitions, examined outcomes for specific populations and program types, and explored alternative ways to calculate metrics. The group reviewed related tools such as employment surveys, DataVista, and CCC Apply and developed recommendations for their improvement. The field representatives also discussed

ways to strengthen the use of available data, including reviewing existing professional development materials and identifying new resources that would support data use. Finally, the group reflected on the accountability structures that are most likely to drive further program improvements. This led to a set of recommendations that will ensure that CAEP data better supports the outcomes prioritized by the legislature and ongoing program development and improvement.

Recommendations

CHANGE THE GOAL SETTING PROCESS

Consortia would benefit from clearer state goals to inform the selection of local priorities. Therefore:

- CAEP leadership should set evidence-based statewide goals for expected program capacity and outcomes
- CAEP leadership should identify key milestones that are determined based on program type
- Data trends should be used to recommend targets for both key milestones and state goals
- Planning should be refocused on three-year strategies to attain those goals

IMPROVE DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

Currently, the accountability data from K12 adult schools and noncredit programs are not consistently collected and processed, which causes adult education providers to not trust the information in DataVista. Furthermore, CAEP consortia are hampered in their ability to set targets because information is unavailable on some goals. Therefore:

- CAEP leadership should shift how metrics are calculated to improve alignment and clarity
- CCCCCO and CDE should support the collection of missing data points

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ALIGN REGIONAL NEEDS WITH STATE GOALS

Adult education providers would benefit from more direction, professional development, and technical assistance on how to use accountability data so regional planning will align with future statewide priorities and targets, while still meeting regional needs.

Therefore:

- Every consortium should have access to experts who can support data quality across TE and MIS and enhance the coordinated use of statewide and local information to inform regional efforts
- All consortia should be supported to maintain the local infrastructure necessary for

accurate, real-time information that complements the accountability data provided in DataVista

ALIGN POLICY AND INCENTIVES

Adult educators are striving to improve transition to career and technical education (CTE) and college, but policies that are outside of their control can make this outcome challenging to obtain, therefore:

- California should establish policies that address roadblocks to transition
- The state should create incentives for K12 adult school, noncredit, and credit collaboration that align with statewide goals.

ENSURE ONGOING REVIEW

Having the opportunity for practitioners to meet with state leaders to compare policy to practice can help to ensure that CAEP is being implemented as intended. Therefore:

- CAEP leadership should convene a Data and Accountability Advisory Group to meet periodically to review implementation of these recommendations, troubleshoot challenges, prioritize continuous improvement, and respond to new opportunities.

Core Actions

CHANGE THE GOAL SETTING PROCESS

- 1) **Create statewide goals for adult education.** Specific goal numbers will be set by examining trends for each institution and consortium and establishing ambitious but actionable targets. The state will aim to address:
 - the number and percentage of reportable individuals who become participants
 - the number and percentage of English language learners and Adults with Disabilities who attain skills that support self-sufficiency
 - the number and percentage of participants who improve their earnings
 - the number and percentage of participants who transition to non-developmental credit community college coursework, either by enrolling at a college or completing coursework that is recognized through credit for prior learning

These metrics will be assessed using historical data to ensure that they accurately capture the progress of adult learners.

- 2) **Create progress metrics aligned with state goals.** For the purpose of three-year planning, institutions will focus on a subset of metrics for each of the CAEP program areas, in addition to the overall goals. Progress metrics would be:

English as a Second Language (ESL)

- Improved an EFL
- Attained an Immigrant Integration Milestone
- Transitioned to Adult Secondary Education
- Transitioned to CTE

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

- Improved an EFL
- Transitioned to Adult Secondary Education
- Transitioned to CTE

Adult Secondary Education (ASE)

- Improved an EFL
- Earned a High School Diploma or Equivalency
- Transitioned to CTE

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

- Attained a Workforce Milestone
- Earned a Certificate, Credential, or Licensure
- Improved Earnings

Adults with Disabilities

- Attained a Skills Milestone
- Earned a Certificate, Credential, or Licensure
- Transitioned to CTE

Adults Supporting Child K-12 Success

- Earned a Certificate, Credential, or Licensure

These benchmarks will be assessed using historical data to ensure that they accurately capture the progress of adult learners.

- 3) **Provide target goal and progress metrics to consortia.** A K12 adult school and noncredit practitioner committee will work with CCCCCO and CDE to establish an evidence-based process for setting targets. Targets will be based on trends from prior outcomes and reviewed by both the practitioner committee and the agency leads. The DataVista team will use this process to provide each institution with targets for the CAEP goals, as well as targets for progress metrics in each program area. NOVA will include draft targets, which institutions will accept or amend. CAEP leadership will align report templates for three-year plans, so that institutions and consortia

establish strategies to attain those targets or clarify why they could not meet those targets and suggest alternatives. Consortia will adjust annual reports to focus on analysis regarding why they did or did not meet their targets. DataVista will include a view that shows outcomes compared to target.

IMPROVE DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

4) Recalculate progress metrics needed by institutions and consortia to attain statewide goals. Make the following changes to metrics.

- *Education Functional Level (EFL) Gain*: Create two metrics:
 - CASAS score changes
 - Course progressions: CB21 level changes at the college level and a similar metric in TE
- *Workforce Milestone*: Reformulate as attaining one of the following: completing a workforce preparation course, short term vocational course, or pre-apprenticeship course
- *Transition to Postsecondary*:
 - Create two different metrics: Transition to CTE (K12 adult school, noncredit, or credit) and Transition to a Credit Course (nondevelopmental)
 - Completing a course that is accepted for credit for prior learning will be counted as meeting the Transition to a Credit Course metric
 - The timeframe for Transition to a Credit Course will extend to two years (instead of the current same or subsequent)
 - Both metrics will be calculated by examining course-taking patterns for each participant (rather than self-reported data)
- *Earn a High School Diploma or Equivalency*: CCCCO will work with CDE to secure data sharing agreements with test providers to improve data
- *Completed a Credential*: Guidance will clarify that the threshold for credentials is 48 hours of direct instruction or directly supervised activity under an instructor
- *Improved Earnings*:
 - The metric will be calculated using the state wage file and the Employment & Earnings Survey only
 - K12 adult school participants will be included in the Chancellor's Office data matching with the state wage file so that additional quarters of employment data can be examined

5) Make improvements to MIS, TE, and DataVista

DataVista

- Ensure NOVA and the CAEP fact sheets are aligned with the CAEP dashboard
- Create a CAEP dashboard view that compares targets to outcomes at the institution and regional levels
- Create an additional metric on how many students transition to CTE and to credit coursework over longer timeframes
- Create an additional metric on the number of reportable individuals who receive support services and ensure consistency across TE and MIS
- Provide downloadable unsuppressed information from the CAEP dashboard dataset to authorized parties
- Provide additional, plain language materials that clarify how data is combined in DataVista and how metrics are calculated, and make it easier to find plain language resources in DataVista
- Provide regional training about DataVista and how to use it

MIS

- Require institutions to report CIP codes that are aligned to allowable codes for noncredit courses and document CIP codes for aligned credit courses
- Document Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes for all CTE programs
- Create additional MIS field for vocational ESL/integrated education & training courses or provide guidance to use SAM codes to identify vocational content
- Revise definitions of adult education program types (CB22) to align with current noncredit offerings, including categories aligned with CAEP plus other common programs (this could be done through a new data element, so that CB22 remains and no change is made to Title 5)
- Amend educational goal options to include those associated with noncredit programs and reflect these options in CCC Apply
- Ensure asynchronous courses hours are captured in the SX05 MIS data element
- Update the Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI) to include CIP codes at the course level, with support for CIP code selection to ensure consistency
- Explore ways to enhance support that the Chancellor's Office provides to noncredit programs to respond to questions about MIS and issues that could impact the CAEP metrics

TE

- Require institutions to report CIP codes in a manner that is consistent with the approach used by the Chancellor's Office (follow IPEDS guidance about not using credit codes and designate an additional field for aligned credit programs)
- Document SOC codes for all CTE programs
- Add a data point that calculates course progression for ESL and ABE
- Share college-level information with the Chancellor's Office (rather than district-level) so information like EFL gains based on CASAS scores can be attributed to a specific institution
- Include K12 adult school data in the Cradle to Career Data System
- Require all agencies to input earnings data if a student has a job

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ALIGN REGIONAL NEEDS WITH STATE GOALS

- 6) **Fund CAEP data coordinators that are sufficient to support all members of CAEP consortia.** Currently, some but not all CAEP consortia have data coordinators who are helping to improve data collection and use. To ensure that all adult education providers have access to similar resources, the state will expand the data support infrastructure. Each data coordinator will develop an annual workplan that will be vetted by the CAEP Leadership Office. Hiring contracts will include provisions that data coordinators must work with data experts at the Chancellor's Office and CASAS to ensure that consortia members are capturing information necessary to calculate CAEP metrics. In addition, they must coordinate with each other and work with technical assistance providers to ensure that effective practices are disseminated across the state. They will be expected to convene institutions within consortia, travel to support the institutions across their consortium, and demonstrate that they are supporting all providers and not just the institution that hired them. To build fluency with both MIS and TE, data coordinators will go through a boot camp that clarifies how each system is structured and how data are brought into alignment across systems.

Data coordinators will have the following responsibilities:

Ensure accountability data is of high quality and aligns with CAEP reporting requirements

- Work with CASAS and the Chancellor's Office to review the quality and consistency of both TE and MIS data for the K12 adult schools and noncredit programs within their region and identify specific issues that need to be addressed by each institution
- Work with institutions to address data collection and data quality issues
- Work with institutions to set up data infrastructure necessary to collect metrics
- Support consortia members to understand how information differs between TE

and MIS, how metrics are constructed, and implications for local data management

- Onboard new administrators to ensure they understand data collection and use
- Support K12 adult schools and noncredit programs to document new data points required for the revised CAEP metrics
- Provide support that is tailored to the needs of each member institution

Assist consortia to use data for planning

- Support the regular review of DataVista dashboards and reports generated from the CAEP data set, MIS, and TE
- For the regional planning process, identify the data that consortia members need to review to advance their priorities in addition to the proposed targets, such as labor market information
- Assist with the process of assessing suggested targets and finalizing them
- Support periodic review of progress toward targets, using information from DataVista
- Use new features that provide access to unsuppressed but anonymized summary data from the CAEP dashboard to conduct analyses for the consortia that support planning, including analyses of how individuals swirl across K12 adult schools, noncredit programs, and credit over time (note: people hired for this role will be granted access to anonymized data, with appropriate legal permissions, and distill information that meets FERPA requirements for use by the consortia)
- Assist the consortia members to pull supplemental information from local data systems or other sources to complement DataVista
- Coordinate with CAEP, noncredit, and DataVista technical assistance providers to align professional development and to create customized training to address specific data concerns within the region
- Coordinate with other regional CAEP data coordinators to share effective strategies

Support consortia members to share data to support program implementation

- Support consortia members to determine how they could use participant-level and more real-time information to assist with transition and job placement

ALIGN POLICY AND INCENTIVES

- 7) **Establish mechanisms to promote transition to credit courses.** Focus on several discrete activities that would improve the number of adult education participants who enroll in credit courses and also support other state priorities:
- Conduct an analysis that identifies K12 adult school and noncredit programs that support greater job stability, stronger earnings, and pathways to longer-term credentials, so that adult education programs are included on the state’s industry recognized credentials list.
 - Prioritize programs with strong employment outcomes for credit for prior learning assessment, with faculty and employers conducting a simultaneous review of all K12 adult school and noncredit programs in specific industry sectors.
 - Support participants to secure credit transcripts by documenting courses that receive credit for prior learning in eTranscript California.
 - Develop partnerships between K12 adult schools, noncredit programs, credit programs, and employers to implement programs that are eligible for Workforce Pell and maximize Ability to Benefit.
 - Focus technical assistance on supporting consortia to implement adult dual enrollment and support implementation of credit for prior learning.
 - Leverage adult education to provide pre-apprenticeship training and establish clear pathways to apprenticeship.
 - Develop consistent guidance and policies for colleges about mirrored courses, adult dual enrollment, articulation, and credit for prior learning for both K12 adult school and noncredit courses to ensure that coursework is accepted and to accelerate the number of participants who subsequently earn credit credentials.
 - Partner with Mapping Articulated Pathways (MAP) to set goals for the number of K12 adult school and noncredit courses that are evaluated for credit for prior learning in the next two years.
 - Document adult education programs in the new California Credential Registry to clarify the breadth and focus of adult education opportunities and to ensure they can be included in the Career Passport, a new tool that will support employers to hire individuals based on skills they have built in both academic and nonacademic contexts.
- 8) **Address ways to improve support for participants at every step of their journey.** Create incentives to capture more comprehensive and clearly defined information on the barriers faced by participants and the support and referrals they receive. Use the data to enhance the information participants receive about other

available funding and services, and to support transition to CTE and credit.

- 9) **Identify policy changes that would support implementation.** Determine policy changes that would help consortia implement foundational systems required for improved coordination, such as:
- capturing necessary data points
 - requiring that the person responsible for data management at the local member level to participate in annual training on data sources
 - supporting local data sharing
 - mechanisms for credit bearing programs at community colleges to recognize credit for prior learning from K12 adult schools and noncredit programs
 - evaluate alternative funding models secure Franchise Tax Board data on participants, matched by both SSN and ITIN