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- [Lori] Welcome, everyone and thank you for joining us to learn more about the first of four innovative practices in adult education that we will be recognizing over the next three years. Our agenda today includes remarks from Cheryl Keenan, OCTAE's director of Adult Education and Literacy. I will provide a brief overview of the project followed by a discussion of the criteria and process by our principal investigator Judy Alamprese.

Next up, we will hear from each of the four practices followed by a panel discussion focused on innovation. Following the panel discussion, we will take questions from our audience. And finally, at the close of the webinar today, I will share how you can learn more about the Advancing Innovation Project, about these four practices, and how you can apply for the next round.

We have an ambitious agenda for the next 60 minutes so let's get started. We're going to begin today with a welcome from Cheryl Keenan, OCTAE's director of Adult Education and Literacy. Cheryl.

- [Cheryl] Good afternoon, it's great to be here today to welcome you to this webinar, especially during National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week. This webinar is one of a series of activities that my office the Office of Career and Technical and Adult Education or OCTAE, is sponsoring this week to raise awareness about the value of adult education services.

When my team was planning events for this week, we believed it was especially important to recognize programs that are actively committed to innovating. The four programs that we recognize today applied in the first round of applications of a project designed to shine a light on innovative practices within adult education programs.

So thank you, Wendy, Karla, Holly, and Jane, for stepping up and applying in our first round. And thank you for your commitment to improving services to your learners. As this project continues, our aim is to compile a list of innovative practices to share with other adult educators and with the broader workforce community.

My message to you our audience participants today is this. I hope you are inspired by these four programs. I encourage you to reflect on what we are learning about innovation and perhaps apply for recognition of an innovative practice in your program in one of our future rounds. So thank you and enjoy the webinar.

- Thank you, Cheryl. So just to give you a little bit of an overview the Advancing Innovation in Adult Education Project is a five-year effort to identify and highlight innovative practices in adult education.

As Cheryl mentioned. It is funded by OCTAE and led by Manhattan Strategy Group in partnership with Abt Associates. Today, we're talking about the first of five rounds of selected practices that will be highlighted in national dissemination efforts. And just to give you a sense of our timeline, as you know, today, we're talking about round one. Round two applications were submitted in April of this year and are currently under review.

We are gearing up to launch the round three application phase due at the end of January 2021. And then we'll have round four and five following in 2021 and 2022. Our final announcements will be made in the summer of 2023. I'd like to turn it over to Judy now to provide you with some insights into how we can identify those three HSED programs.

- [Judy] Thank you, Lori. Next slide. To provide the context for the innovative practices that are being discussed today, I'm going to first review the criteria and processes that we use to select these practices. When we began the project, we wanted a definition of practice that would be supported by stakeholders across education systems, and that is relevant to adult education.

So we adapted the definition used by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD to come to the point where we have three types of practices as shown on the slide. The first is a product such as a curriculum or instructional materials or assessment materials.

The second type of practice is a service such as the inclusion of career and college advising, or other kinds of students' supports. And the third type of practice is a process for delivering adult education services, such as online learning. Or as ways of organizing services such as integrated education and training or alternative approaches to a secondary credential.

These practices can be newly developed or significantly improved in terms of their content, mode of delivery, use with different populations of

learners, or in other ways. Next slide, please. The practices must also provide data about positive outcomes for adult learners.

As shown in the slide these outcomes include but are not limited to attainment of credentials or certificates at the secondary or post-secondary level. Enrolment in post-secondary education or training programs or development of skills. Next slide. We also set criteria to use in selecting the practices. We have used three categories of criteria.

The first is the administrative criteria concerning the funding source for the program offering the practice which needs to be WIOA Title II the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. And the timeline for the development or refinement of the practice, where we are asking for practices that have been developed or significantly enhanced within 10 years.

The second category of criteria address the features or characteristics of a practice. Such as meeting the definition of a practice in terms of being a product, service, or process. That the practice be innovative. Which is defined as a practice that is different from what is generally implemented in adult education, as determined by existing literature, about ABE program services, and learner impacts.

Or the expert judgment of individuals with knowledge of current adult education program services. The stipulations in Title II of the WIOA also our source of categories of practices that we are considering for the project. The third feature is that a practice be portable.

Which means that it can be used in whole or in part by another education program depending on the requirements for staff development, the cost of implementing the practice, and the availability of professional development. The last category concerns learners' outcomes from participating in the practice.

Where the outcomes need to be positive, they should be reasonable given the type of practice that the innovation is. And that they should be based on national reporting system or similar types of data from at least one year of learners' participation. Next slide.

Our last process was to set up three stages of selecting practices. In the first stage, we rated the practice based on those categories that I just discussed in the previous slide. Concerning the funding and timeline for

the practices development and use, the features of the practice and learner outcomes.

For the clarification stage, we collected additional information particularly about the processes for implementation, the resources needed the staffing and the learner outcomes. Final stage was validation. In this stage, we collected more information and data about the practice in learner outcomes.

In future rounds the validation stage may also include a site visit, to observe the practice in operation, and talk with staff implementing the practice. Based on these processes, we selected four practices for round one of the project. Next slide. So the four practices we selected are the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program IBEST implemented at Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona.

The Integrated High School Equivalency Diploma, known as HSED Program at Western Technical College in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The Multi-Craft Core Curriculum High School Equivalency Diploma, shortcut name is MC3/HSED Program and literacy services...conducted by Literacy Services of Wisconsin, in Milwaukee and Waukesha, Wisconsin.

And the fourth is the National External Diploma Program NEDP, which is being implemented at the Mercy Learning Center in Bridgeport, Connecticut. These four practices are all aimed at expanding access to adult education and expediting the amount of time learners spend in adult education.

They involve the attainment of a secondary credential, including a traditional high school diploma, an equivalency diploma, and a GED. They address learners' transition to further education training or employment early in the practice to facilitate learners' next steps. They evolve collaboration with partners and they all have flexibility in delivery to account for the learners' varied schedules and commitments.

We are delighted to have the representative from each of the practices with us today to provide an overview of their practices. After their presentation, I will facilitate a discussion with them about the features of their practices. For those of you in the audience, we would ask that you begin to submit your questions about these individual practices using the chat function.

And we will address the questions at the end of the discussion with the practice representatives. Next slide. We will begin our presentations this afternoon with Wendy Scheder Black from the IBEST Program at Pima Community College in Tucson. Wendy.

- [Wendy] Thank you so much, Judy. I am so proud to be here today representing Pima Community College and our adult basic education for college and career program. Today I will be highlighting some of the innovations that have led to student success within our IBEST Programs. IBEST or Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training is a collaborative instructional model that comes out of Washington State.

In IBEST, students work toward multiple goals at the same time. Post-secondary certificate, high school equivalency diploma for those who need it, industry-recognized credentials, and employment in the sector in which they studied. All of our IBEST programs have some common features including an adult education instructor and career and technical education or CTE instructor, co-planning, and co-teaching.

We have students in IBEST with high school diplomas and students who are seeking high school equivalency diplomas. IBEST programs use a cohort model and are typically about a year long. They all involve industry-recognized credentials, which are built into our CTE partner certificates. All IBEST programs are eligible for ability to benefit financial aid, and most students also co-enroll with One Stop.

Finally, our program design embeds coordinated wraparound support to our students from all partners. IBEST in and of itself is an innovative model but I'd like to highlight today some of the innovations that we have made to that model inside of our own context. First, the integrated support to help students pass their GED or complete Arizona's new HSE Plus Career-Ready portfolio to attain their high school equivalency diploma.

Braided funding and the use of ability to benefit. Our teaming approach to collaboration and embedded wraparound and support services. We also include co-enrollment with One Stop into our IBEST intake process, which is another innovation that we developed over time. I'll go into a little bit more detail about some of these innovations starting with our funding model.

We've worked hard to build strong relationships around the college and with our One Stop partners to ensure the wraparound supports that

students need. Including leveraging WIOA Title I dollars, local college funds, and federal financial aid for high school equivalency seekers using the ability to benefit provision. Often our students will use Title I funding to cover tuition costs for the first six credits, and then they'll shift over to ATB for the remainder of their certificate program.

And while both ATB and Title I funding possibilities improve access to college and career training programs, they definitely increase the access and possibilities for our students. Another innovation we've developed is the teaming approach to our IBEST program implementation in the areas of leadership, instruction and operations.

So it's essential to have the leadership from all partners be involved in the design and development of this integrated model. As we discover obstacles or challenges, the leadership team is ready to make changes to address them, sometimes large systemic changes. These leaders are also responsible for holding their own teams accountable to the goals and expectations of the program.

On our instructional teams, the adult-led instructors meet with the CTE faculty and our IBEST advisor every week. This consistency helps to facilitate the instructional collaboration that is at the heart of any IBEST. And plays an essential role in ensuring the students have a seamless educational experience. Operations teams manage program implementation across multiple complex partner systems.

They adjust the program design when needed. It plans events and shares data on student progress, attendance, and employment. When there are crisis situations, we think together as a team and identify resources for students. Over the last couple of years, we've expanded our IBEST team to also include one IBEST program advisor and two student services specialists.

And this team leads the intake process that helps students navigate these systems, connect students to employment opportunities, and provide supports as students have life challenges hit. They also help with financial aid, they provide testing support, and manage all of our data.

Together the Student Services team provides a supportive and holistic approach to student development. So overall, we've seen some really strong student outcomes with this model. We see a 75% completion rate in our IBEST programs. 80% of our students are employed within a year

of completion. And 50% of those students are employed in the sector in which they trained. But not all students move into employment.

In our two most recent IBEST cohorts 57% of those students continued to the next level of certificates. So they carry on with their education. Our ATB recipients are completing post-secondary certificates at slightly higher rates than those not using ATB. And 71% of our students who are seeking their high school equivalency diploma, pass the entire GED exam during that program year.

In our most recent AIT IBEST cohort, 14 students earned a combined 78 industry-recognized credentials, giving them a real advantage as they go out and seek employment. So there have been so many positive results from this model. Seeing adult learners pass the GED, earn A's and B's in their college classes, earn industry-recognized credentials, and then start a career or continue in college.

This is why we continue to innovate and invest in this model. We see the results of the hard work and bringing together the large complex systems of adult ed, career and technical ed, and WIOA Title I partners in increased access and in student success. This motivates us to continue to innovate so that we can strengthen, scale, and adapt this model to meet the needs of our students as they prepare to enter this rapidly changing workforce landscape.

- Thank you, Wendy. Our next presenter is Karla Walker, who is a science and math instructor. Who has been part of the team at Western Technical College in La Crosse, Wisconsin, that developed the Integrated High School Equivalency Diploma Program, Karla?

- [Karla] Hi. Western TC redesigned its 5.09 HSED Program in 2016 to align with Wisconsin's shift in ABE curriculum, to address the US Department of Education, college, and career readiness standards in adult education. And reflect the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act priorities.

The 5.09 Integrated High School Equivalency Diploma Program is an alternative route through which adults in the state of Wisconsin can earn a high school equivalency diploma that is awarded by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Most learners in our program complete in two semesters. But there is a high degree of flexibility so some learners have finished in a semester and a half.

And some have finished in more than a year. The first semester can be co-taught by two certified teachers face-to-face, or taught by one certified teacher, or teacher-guided through individual instruction on Blackboard. The second semester course can be taught by one certified teacher or teacher-guided through individual instruction on Blackboard.

And learners have earned up to 12 college credits upon completion of the Integrated HSED Program. These are the requirements for the two semesters. There are five units in the semester I course which can stand alone. Once a learner has completed a unit they do not have to repeat it.

The course curriculum integrates seven content areas: communication, health, math, reading, science, social studies, and computer literacy. Across five thematic units that reflect the learners' process of achieving a diploma or starting a career. Preparation, building, balance, challenges, and obstacles, and change.

In semester two, learners take a course called Transition. It addresses the employability competencies and allows for work on credits for prior learning. The second semester also includes an option to enroll in any college course. Learners take the ACCUPLACER, apply to the college, and submit a financial aid form.

Then they meet with a career coach to enroll in a course as a pathway to a program. The civics exam must also be passed in order to receive an HSED at Western. It can be taken in either one of those semesters. This program structure has the flexibility to serve learners at high-risk for interruptions in their education.

The first semester organized into those five units enables learners to stop after completion of a unit and continue on a new unit at a later date if necessary. Learners have up to two years to complete the five units. Each unit in semester one begins with a guiding question-based in social studies or civics.

And instruction focuses on learner exploration, problem-solving, participation, and growth. Most of the lessons or activities had to be created by the lead teachers. Although there are no formal tests, there is constant assessment through discussion, project-based and individual assignments, reading, writing, lab work, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Learners compile their work in a portfolio during the second semester, and at the close of the course, they can choose to interview with a business instructor to obtain credit for prior learning. This is allowable because the curriculum for this 5.09 course is parallel to that of a WTC business course called Professionalism and Success.

Learners can also obtain an additional three credits for the documentation of their work history, and an industry-recognized customer service representative certificate. The rates of learners participating in an integrated HSED program have increased annually.

Many past learners have recruited friends and family members to enroll in the program. More than half of the learners who earn an HSED also earn college credit and try a program at Western. Credits earned range from 3 to 12.

- Thank you very much, Karla. I'd like to note that this practice that Karla just described and the one that Holly is going to describe next are examples of the state of Wisconsin's 5.09 high school equivalency option. That enables adult education programs to develop unique high school equivalency programs that meet the 5.09 criteria set forth by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

So this is looking at one option one mechanism that both programs have used in very creative ways. So our next presenter is Holly McCoy, who is the executive director of Literacy Services of Wisconsin. And she will discuss the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum High School Diploma Equivalency Program. Holly - [Holly] Thank you.

Literacy Services of Wisconsin is a nonprofit adult literacy organization located in the cities of Milwaukee and Waukesha, Wisconsin, we see BIG STEP. We developed different locations. And our continuum of programming combines academic programs, digital literacy, and workforce skills training to help students prepare for employment and/or post-secondary transition and enrollment.

Our organization stands behind our solid outcomes, which have consistently produced the highest number of GED HSED graduates in the greater Milwaukee area. For a community-based organization that is not also officially designated a GED testing site. Literacy Services works directly with the Wisconsin Technical College System to partner an adult education and family literacy at grants that specifically support our comprehensive bridge programming.

About three years ago, Literacy Services received a grant from our local impact 100 that provided us the opportunity to design, and pilot, an integrated education and training program in partnership with the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership/Building Industry Group & Skilled Trades Employment Program.

Say that five times fast WRTP/BIGSTEP. We developed what is now known as the MC3/HSED Program. Participants in Literacy Services Program have the opportunity to earn their high school equivalency diploma by completing a curriculum based on competencies aligned with the nationally recognized and implemented College and Career Readiness Standards alongside the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum.

Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction has an alternative public instruction code for high school equivalency. Judy actually just mentioned that. Those codes include a 5.09, which is what our HSED program is. HSED Program is a great opportunity for adults to approach their credential in a different way.

Aside from the civics and ACCUPLACER, all other assessments in the program are entirely performance-based and allow students to achieve competencies in their own way. It empowers students to think more about their learning. In order to enter an apprenticeship in the building trades, a participant needs a high school diploma.

We were able to address this need in our community by aligning the programs of our two separate organizations. Wisconsin's construction industry projects a 10% increase in the next decade, making this program a necessary piece to support in the state. This program is a unique way to connect adults in need of a high school credential directly to a pathway for apprenticeship within the building trades.

Participants are concurrently enrolled in both programs. And the instructors work together to make sure the curriculum is aligned and students are receiving contextualized support. This also provides an opportunity for students to improve their foundational reading, writing, and numeracy skills in a learning environment directly linked to their desired field.

The MC3 curriculum includes all of the modules that you'll see on the slide. MC3 was developed by the North America's Building Trades Union. And although the curriculum can be accessed online, we deliver

the instruction in person with an industry expert. Requirements for entry into the program are that students must be 18 and a half.

Be a Wisconsin resident, have a TABE NRS level 3 or higher level M, and have interest in the building trades. We work primarily with adults and some opportunity youth who may be disengaged from the traditional school systems. We've had to adapt our entry requirements during transition from TABE 9/10 to 11/12. The whole purpose of an HSED is to provide equitable access, and we wanted to ensure that students were given realistic entry expectations.

All students must interview with a member of the building trades before entry into the course. Another thing to note is that the MC3 is a WIOA recognized pre-apprenticeship credential. And the outcomes and responsibilities of each organization within our partnership are listed on the screen. The program can range anywhere from 16 to 18 weeks and require students to complete projects outside of their designated class time to ensure that they meet their 320-hour requirement.

The hour requirement is based on state-mandated guidance for our 5.09 HSED programs. And some class days are longer than four hours. Students may go on a field trip to the Painters' Hall or attend community events or visit other related organizations and worksites that extend their class day outside of their normal schedule.

We piloted this program in 2017 and we evaluated the pilot and considered communication between organizations, instructors, and student feedback. And then for our second year, we had a 75% completion rate. As I'm sure is pretty similar across the board 2019/2020 fiscal year was impacted heavily by COVID-19.

And even though we were able to successfully transition online, many of our students were not able to follow through on coursework even with the additional support. So we've gathered some additional feedback and we're hopeful that this fiscal year will be even better even with virtual learning.

- Thank you very much, Holly. Our last presenter is Jane Ferreira, who is the president and CEO of the Mercy Learning Center in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Jane will discuss the National External Diploma Program.

- [Jane] Thank you, Judy. Mercy Learning Center is a 33-year-old nonprofit organization located in Connecticut's largest city, one of the

most economically challenged, Bridgeport. Our population is 143,000, of which 20% of women are without a high school diploma. We are accountable to the state of Connecticut Adult Education Department and to the Mercy Learning Center Board of Directors.

Established in 1987 our founders who were educators recognized that women were not able to assist their children with their homework, and began a literacy program for women. Our motto is "Educate a woman educate a family." We serve approximately 1100 women a year from over 55 different countries, ages 17 to 80.

And 98% are at or below poverty. The NEDP is one of several programs offered at Mercy Learning Center. Our students' initial academic ranges are from beginning to high intermediate ESL, and beginning ABE to high intermediate basic education. Our curriculum is integrated so that students can move from full-time to part-time as need be according to their work schedule or their family needs.

Our support services allow students to remain in school throughout periods of difficulty. The National External Diploma Program is a competency-based high school credentialing program for adults with prior education, work, and life experience who need a secondary credential to establish or advance in a career, or enter post-secondary education.

The NEDP is not an instructional program but is a performance assessment system that enables adults to earn a high school diploma by demonstrating academic and life skill competencies in 10 content areas. Adults demonstrate their skills or competencies by completing simulations of life and work activities in content areas such as applied math, civic literacy, and community participation, geography, science, and 21st-century workplace.

Since 2014, the NEDP has been greatly enhanced and the NEDP competencies are now aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards in adult education. And also take into account the integrated education and training requirements in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. As of 2020, NEDP can be delivered entirely virtually or in person. The NEDP has two phases of assessment.

The first phase is a diagnostic assessment, which adults qualify to participate in the NEDP by meeting score levels designated for the CASAS Reading and Math test, and a writing assessment. They also

complete a series of self-assessments and career exploration and technology, and determine their individualized skill and employment occupational training, or their readiness for post-secondary education.

Adults who meet the CASAS test requirements and have an individualized skill they can demonstrate enter the second phase of the NEDP which is generalized assessment. Adults who do not meet these requirements are encouraged to participate in our tutoring program or other classes and then retest so they can enter the program. In the generalized assessment phase, adults demonstrate their skill in a 10 academic and life skill areas by completing their work independently, and then by meeting with an assessor on a weekly basis.

Adults also must demonstrate an individualized skill through prior work experience, participation in an occupational training program, demonstration of a specialized skill such as perhaps music or tailoring, or demonstrate their readiness to enter college. Adults who demonstrate 100% mastery of the NEDP competencies can earn a traditional high school diploma.

The NEDP uses a competency framework that includes adults' demonstration of academic and life skills in a specialized skill that is the basis of the receipt of a high school diploma. Through the performance assessment system, the NEDP enables adults to develop their skills and knowledge while fulfilling their assessment requirements.

The NEDP program works when you have resources available to your NEDP team. Since our team is part of a larger educational program, access to supplemental instruction if a student falls short in the diagnostic phase, has been critical for our success. The student may be assigned a tutor who will be giving her the instruction needed in the areas that she is weak in.

Or if the student is having other difficulties, transportation problems, childcare issues, medical needs to be assigned a caseworker. And this caseworker will help her stay within the program and advance in her educational journey. I would highly recommend this program for those students who struggle with test anxiety or perhaps not do well on timed tests.

This program is extremely flexible and can be managed by an excellent trained assessor to be able to work with a student's schedule while maintaining the integrity of the assessment phase. Some students have

done this program in about four months. And our longest student took 15 months because of her medical condition. This program is ideal for the non-traditional student who has work experience, some basic education, computer skills, and needs to focus on achieving a high school diploma.

Students in this program are typically raising families, working full time, and trying to get schooling. Thank you.

- Thank you very much, Jane. Thanks to all of you for your informative presentations about your practices. They really illustrate many aspects of innovation and we are very grateful to you for that. So our next part of the seminar is my discussion with the presenters. And we're going to begin by asking each of you to describe the aspects of the practice that the learners find particularly appealing, and that motivate them to enroll in the practice.

And Wendy, I'm going to begin with you.

- All right. Yeah, I think our students are drawn to our IBEST Programs for a few reasons. For students who are seeking a high school equivalency diploma, it's about access to college and to employment opportunities, they did not feel were otherwise available to them. When they learn that they can study for the GED at the same time that they work for their college certificate, our students are excited and they're motivated to go and grab that opportunity.

And then when they learn that they have access to funding through ability to benefit or Title I funds was a game-changer. Students are also drawn to the support that they're going to get from the two instructors and the additional instructional time, as well as a dedicated Student Services team. So many of our students have shared with us that they felt unconfident coming into a college program.

But when they learned that there would be additional support for math, for writing, English language, or technology skills, students felt supported and more confident that they could succeed. They also really value the partnership with One Stop and recognize, I think the multiple benefits that this integrated model provides for them, and that will connect them with real employment opportunities.

- Right, thanks very much, Wendy. Karla, are you on? Next.

- Yep, here I am. Our HSED option is the only other alternative to GED testing at Western. And so the learners who enroll in our program usually have high anxiety about testing, therefore, they are attracted to the course for that reason. Student evaluations from the co-taught face-to-face course are overwhelmingly positive in regards to experienced co-teaching and cohorts.

The team decided early on that to achieve the goal of integrating the curriculum, we would need a team of two experienced teachers in the classroom throughout the class time to ensure rigor just-in-time learning and expediency. This aspect of the practice appeals to learners because they see two adults interacting professionally, always have a model student to follow, and have two teachers that know them and care about their success.

The cohort grown over the first semester includes the teachers and continues through the second-semester transition course. The cohort keeps learners motivated, holds them accountable to each other, and allows every learner to excel in some area to build their confidence.

- Thank you very much, great. Holly.

- So many of our students are excited that they have an approximate timeline from start to completion. They've wanted to complete their high school diploma for quite some time and are just excited to be able to do that and begin learning pre-apprenticeship skills. We also offer supportive services through FCET and other community partners.

So we support our students with bus passes, child care support all of that. And we make sure that students are only at one location. We have a literacy services instructor on-site at WRTP/BIG STEP. This way, our students don't have to figure out how to get from point A to point B.

So we try to make sure that it's really accessible, especially because transportation can be such an issue for so many of our students. And for many students who cannot pass the GED, this is just an awesome alternative option.

- Great. Thank you very much, Holly. Jane, would you like to talk about what attracts people to the NEDP?

- Yes, I think for most of our students it's the flexibility and the independence that the program allows so they can come here to the

center or they can do the work from home. And being remote now, it's really been flexible during the COVID-19 experience. For the English language learner student, the pace and the opportunity to process and reflect has been a key reason for their choice of this program.

It gives them time to learn while they're accomplishing these assessments. I think for the older student receiving acknowledgment of their prior work and life experience is very affirming for them. And it keeps them engaged in the program because they know they can get their high school diploma. For all students, I think knowing that the NEDP program is accepted nationwide, it's also very appealing to them.

And knowing that they can easily get into especially our local community colleges with this certification with this diploma makes it very real for them. And it's very successful for them to go on to post-secondary education.

- Right. Thanks so much, Jane. So next, I'm going to ask a question to each of you that is particular to your practice. And I'll start with Wendy again. And Wendy, given the array of services that Pima Community Colleges IBEST Program offers, how do the IBEST staff ensure that the college and community partners are working well together to support IBEST services in learner success in IBEST?

- Yeah, thanks, Judy. You know, I spoke in my presentation about how we build this structure and talk program design that supports regular collaboration among all partners, and that establishes well-defined roles and contributions to the student experience. So these leadership, instructional, and operations teams are all comprised of representation from all partners.

And are committed to meeting regularly to ensure a seamless integration of services for our students. But for today, I think the best way to illustrate how this teaming structure works, and to emphasize the importance of having the strong collaboration in place, I think the best way to do that is with this student's story. So I'm going to share a story about one of our students who's come through our program.

His name is John, and he was already facing many life challenges when he came to our program. He learned about our IBEST and automated industrial technology while he was on a college visit with his ABE class and discovered that he could pursue career training while studying for his GED. So our program advisor connected him to our dedicated

Workforce Development Specialist over at One Stop who helped John enroll there and develop a training plan.

He was then able to access Title I funds to cover the cost of tuition in the first semester. So about a month into the program, John became homeless. The IBEST program advisor reached out to her network of community partners to identify resources that could help him find temporary housing, and address food and security issues as well. She connected with One Stop again to let them know what was happening so that they could help him find employment and get out of this vulnerable situation.

Because John was technically still considered a youth he was eligible for a youth internship. And his adult education instructors coached him in what to expect on the job and how to be prepared for employment. He got the internship and was able to return to a safer housing situation within a couple of weeks.

But just a few weeks after that our college closed due to the pandemic, as did the company where John was interning. So our adult ed team worked with our college's Student Services teams, to help John apply for emergency funds and borrow a laptop so that he could continue to study. Our CTE and our AE instructional team worked together to quickly get the classes into an online environment.

And they adjusted our program schedule so that students might still complete the program on time. One Stop helped him get back into his internship when they reopened. Our Student Services team helped him get vouchers for the GED and let him know when the testing center reopens in August so that he could schedule his remaining GED tests. So just a week ago, last Friday, John called and let us know that he passed the GED, and he earned his high school equivalency diploma.

So he is going to be participating in our first-ever virtual HSED graduation this Thursday night. I think it's difficult for many to imagine navigating a return to school itself, just that, but then facing housing and food insecurity, unemployment, dealing with a pandemic.

And all the while knowing how hard it can be to navigate through the multiple systems that provide critical resources. So while most of our students may not face the kind of storm or challenges that John faced, they all have their own unique challenges. And a cohesive partnership ties together these resources, making it much more likely that each

individual student can persist and reach their goals. A strong coordinated partnership is the key to providing the kinds of support to each of our students that will help them succeed in their college program and in their future careers.

- Okay, thank you very much, Wendy. I'm going to ask the rest of you just to shorten your remarks a tad so that we have a little bit of time for questions. And Karla, tell us about the ways in which the integrated thematic spiraled approach to your 5.09 curriculum enables the students to learn the content and skills required for the HSED while providing flexibility in their schedule?

- Okay, the key is the integration for the competencies. There is no science hour, math hour communications hour. There are 27 to 34 lessons or activities per unit that address at least two subject area competencies at once.

For example, one lesson includes reading the article *You Can Grow Your Brain* from *Health & Science News*. It presents the research findings that by exercising your brain you can learn throughout your life and that it is a myth that you can't get better at math. This lesson not only provides an opportunity to learn about reading skills, comprehension, and reading strategies but also math, anxiety, and science methods.

In another lesson we have students pretend they are on a deserted island together. They're building cohort problem solving, doing some critical thinking, and looking at social studies concepts. They must choose 10 items from a sinking ship that might be useful to them to survive.

Then they come together in groups and negotiate until they have unanimously agreed on the 10 items the group would retrieve. And they write about their experience with this activity. So that hits social studies, health, and communication. We then weigh all the chosen items using pound and grams scales, which sets them up to...and those are science and math competencies. And this sets them up to learn metric to English and metric conversions to get a total mass in kilograms.

So those are just a couple of examples. Learners lose interest in figuring out which subject area they are working on. We take care of addressing the competencies, they learn the skills through participation and

determination. We knew our program had to be flexible in order to accommodate our high-risk learners and their complicated lives.

We built the five three-week units to stand alone so that if a learner completed only one and then had to step out, they could smoothly transition back into the class in the next semester if they chose. They could also smoothly transition to the online Blackboard version for one unit and back into the class, or they could do the online version for the rest of the semester.

The units do not have to be taken in order. Our managed enrollment plan allows students to start in the second or third unit, and then cycle back to unit one and two in the following semester. This way, learners that don't arrive on day one don't have to wait a whole semester to join the course.

- Great. Thank you so much, Karla. Holly. Let's see tell us about the ways in which the Literacy Services of Wisconsin and your partners work with program participants to keep them focused on completing their pre-apprenticeship certificate, and consider a longer-term career pathway that involves an apprenticeship?

- So from the moment that students express interest in our program, we create a clear timeline for how and when different aspects of the program will begin. Along with setting clear expectations for each. We offer a supportive environment with individual attention and students are given a calendar that outlines when they will be doing their MC3/HSED, and/or hands-on training.

We also make sure that we bring in industry experts to work with students while they're learning. This allows for students to build relationships with not only their instructors but also develop a rapport with those in the field. Ahead of graduation students interview again with leaders in the building trades to get feedback on what they can continue to improve on and how they are excelling in their work.

After completion of the program WRTP works with students to match them up with jobs and contractors. All students must apply to an apprenticeship upon completion of their MC3/HSED. And this also means that we have to simultaneously prepare students for the ACCUPLACER to ensure that they have enough exposure to the different trades to make that informed decision on which trade they would like to go into.

And I'll actually place a quote from one of our students in the chat just to save us some time.

- Okay, thank you so much, Holly. Excellent, thanks. Okay, Jane, given the entity piece design that involves the competency framework and applied performance assessments tell us about the ways in which learners' participation in the NEDP has strengthened their skills and motivation and helped them to determine the next steps in life?

- I found the students who graduate from the program have a new outlook on their lives. They're stronger academically, having built up their confidence while doing these competencies. Because of the rigor of this program, many students share that they have learned so much more than when they were in the classroom. Having to do PowerPoint presentations, public speaking, critical analysis has enriched their personal growth.

Most are now competent that they want to go to college, and many are deciding on careers. Some of the practical applications of the life skills they've had to demonstrate in the program assisted them in their own child-rearing, the workplace responsibilities, and even in their family health. For example of doing the health competency many apply their knowledge to the current illnesses that they've learned to their own family.

They feel prepared to do CPR. They can identify a stroke victim. After completing this competency, many of them decide to go into the health career. I believe that CASAS has done a wonderful job keeping this program relevant, digital, and academically fair, but extremely challenging.

- Thank you very much, Jane. Well, thanks to each of you for your insights about your practices and the ways in which they really are enabling adult learners to both advance in their education and their overall well-being. Melissa, I'm going to turn it to you are there any questions?

- [Melissa] There are a few. There were a few folks that were interested in the target audience and the interest levels of their students. So just were interested in what level students the programs were targeting.

- Right, so actually that information is in the Compendium that we are preparing. So I think I'll just...they can look at that and that might save some time...

- Absolutely.

- And easy. As somebody requested to Holly, talk a little bit more about changing agency's approach with the TABE testing?

- I think Holly has said that when you went from the 9/10 to 11/12, you had to change something. Do you recall?

- Yeah. So it was more that...So in Wisconsin, typically...And this is pretty much standard for everyone. We used to have sort of the NRS, level four on a 9/10. And for most students that still made our program accessible, and it made sure that students were prepared and ready to do that work.

When we shifted to the 11/12, we were seeing that students weren't as able to test at that level four, and so we just adjusted the NRS level to a level three. And what we have found and right, it's not research-based, it's just internal best practice, is that most of our students who are at that NRS level three are pretty equitable to what was a level four on the 9/10.

So that's all I meant by that.

- Okay, thank you, Holly.

- There was a question about the equivalency diplomas being recognized by all states and whether or not that was the case across the programs?

- Yes, I mean, Wisconsin is a state diploma, so it's a state-level diploma. The external diploma is either issued by a local school board which is the case in Connecticut, or it's a state-issued diploma.

So the answer would be yes, they are recognized.

- And we had one just come in about the NEDP. Were there any participants not able to finish the program?

- Yes, often, they have some kind of medical situation or that they move out of state and that state may not have the NEDP in process. But it's usually even with that situation now because NEDP has gone remote, you can actually finish a student now that's moved out of state, and that the state may not be having the NEDP program as part of their high school equivalency.

So it's pretty flexible now with the ability to go virtual.

- Right. Thank you, Jane. Okay, Lori, I'm going to turn it back to you now if there are no other questions, Melissa, are we okay with the questions?

- I think we're good.

- Thank you to our panelists today for your laser focus on innovation it was a great conversation and to everyone who joined us. In the coming weeks, we will be posting a number of resources about these four practices on our website, so do please visit links. Judy referenced one of them the Compendium, there will be a gallery of practices and we'll share some other materials.

In the meantime, we encourage you to apply for the next round due in January. We are officially launching the round three application phase later this month but did not want to miss an opportunity to direct you to the information. And finally, you heard about this a little bit earlier. Please save the date for our virtual site visit with Pima Community College.

If you've never experienced a virtual site visit, I encourage you to join us. It will be 90 minutes. The visit will give you an opportunity to hear from a host of stakeholders including students and teachers, and will emphasize the critical role of partnerships. Thank you again for joining us today.