



# The Literacy Forum

The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy  
February/March 2001

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## Senate Bill 4 to Expand Adult Literacy Services

*Kindly sponsored by Senator Mary Jane Garcia (D-Las Cruces), Senate Bill 4 seeks to expand Adult Literacy Services to community based nonprofit adult literacy programs in New Mexico. The text of the bill follows:*

**AN ACT**

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO EXPAND ADULT AND FAMILY LITERACY SERVICES IN UNDERSERVED AREAS OF THE STATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

A. Two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the library division of the office of cultural affairs for expenditure in fiscal year 2002 for the purpose of contracting with a statewide nonprofit adult literacy organization to provide basic literacy services in areas of the state underserved by existing adult basic education and literacy programs.

B. This appropriation is designated for program management and operating support for community-based literacy programs utilizing volunteer tutors to deliver expanded adult literacy services.

C. Technical support to these programs shall include training on evaluation standards and techniques, best practices in the delivery of literacy services, board development and training, volunteer recruitment and support, financial and program management and quantifiable documentation of outcomes. Existing services will be utilized whenever possible to expand service delivery in underserved areas of the state and to avoid duplication of services.

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With this expanded appropriation, the Coalition will be able to offer additional operating funds to local programs. The Coalition also hopes to build local capacity by initiating a tiered system of local matching to the state appropriated funds. Smaller programs wishing to maintain the current matching system will be

free to request funding at current levels, and also to keep their current levels of cash and in-kind matches. Larger programs will be able to request additional funding beyond current levels, but will be expected to contribute greater cash and in-kind matches. Details about this system will be available to local programs through our Request for

Proposals in May, and will be dependent on the successful passage of this legislation.

**What can you do to help?**  
 As of this writing, the bill is scheduled to go before the Senate Education Committee. If it receives a 'do pass,'

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The Literacy Forum is published bi-monthly by the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy. News and commentary may be submitted to the Coalition using our mail address, e-mail address, phone or fax number. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Accreditation... Painful, but...

*We received the following e-mail from the Valencia County Literacy Council in Belen, who recently completed their accreditation activities for Literacy Volunteers of America with a visit from a Site Surveyor:*

Dear David,

We have just finished our accreditation process (actually it was over on Tuesday). Dorothy Urness of Eau Clair, Wisconsin, was a knowledgeable person both from her background in adult literacy and from her training as an evaluator. She took a full day to read all of our materials which we prepared, met with several members of the board of directors (no tutors or students were able to make it), and went to one of our Family Literacy sites at the Belen Recreation Center on Tuesday morning and meet the ESL class and saw the children's class, as well. She wanted to see some of the areas where we provide an "off site" training, so she went south via highway 304 through Casa Colorado, Veguita, and on to La Jolla. Her examination was complete, as far as I could tell.

While we underwent tremendous challenges during the time to prepare for the accreditation, in the end, the process was very worthwhile.

I feel that I know my job, that the Literacy Coordinator knows her job, and that if we should leave, a new set of employees would know how to do the jobs. Not only are we more knowledgeable about the job, we have developed wonderful materials to help us-- in planning, in evaluation, in public relations activities.

The long and the short of it is that we now appreciate our accreditation process. Thanks to the efforts of the NMCL, we were well prepared. Without your help, it would not have been as "easy" as it was. And it was not necessarily easy. Thanks to you, David, and to Rena for all your help on your end. Thanks to Elizabeth at Read West (Rio Rancho) and to Tracy Jordan (NMCL trainer) for their assistance was invaluable. So thank you for sending them to us.

Very sincerely,  
Pat Waltner

*It struck me that Pat's note really captured what Accreditation is all about, as LVA continues its initiative, and Laubach is just beginning one of its own. The Coalition is honored to offer assistance to all literacy programs in New Mexico who want to meet the national standards of either organization, and to be recognized by funders, city councils, and your local community as a whole as attaining excellence. Too often, it strikes me, New Mexicans expect to find themselves at the bottom of most national lists, and seem to settle for an unequal comparison to the rest of the nation. At its core, the Coalition takes pride in raising the expectations of literacy students, tutors, program directors, communities, and whoever will listen, at or above national levels. -David Godsted*

## Raising the Bar of Excellence

The December 21, 2000 issue of Report on Literacy Programs, published by Business Publishers, Inc., had an interesting article on LVA and Laubach accreditation. Laubach recently had its first affiliates (located in Pennsylvania), complete their accreditation process.

Ron Pugsley, director of the Education Department's Division of Adult Education and Literacy, urges all LLA councils to become accredited. He stated, "to receive federal funding, pro-

grams must not only provide effective services; they must also be able to report the outcomes of those services...Accreditation provides a means for demonstrating that your program delivers quality services."

Laubach does not require accreditation to maintain affiliation; LVA does require it within three years. Their hope is that any program connected with LVA is known by the community to have successfully completed a rigorous accreditation process.

Laubach indicates that as more of their programs become accredited, standards will increase and programs will want to renew their accreditation every four years. LVA will require renewal of accreditation every three years. LVA began designing their accreditation procedures in 1995, after a survey of businesses, literacy programs and community organization expressed their desire for standards of excellence in volunteer literacy programs.

LVA's was "the first effort by a national adult literacy organization to apply a mandatory comprehensive program of quality and accountability standards system-wide."

While approaching it in different ways, Laubach and Literacy Volunteers of America see the writing on the wall. Nationally, volunteer programs are raising the bar of excellence.



## The NMCL, Laubach Literacy Action and Literacy Volunteers of America Combine Forces to Tackle Learning Disabilities

On January 16, the NMCL received a grant from LVA and LLA to provide a four-day workshop on learning disabilities to volunteer literacy providers and their partner ABE staffs.

The grant covers 10 specific locations in New Mexico where there are working relationships between ABE and literacy programs. The purpose of the project, titled *Bridges to Practice* is to improve services to adults who have or are suspected of having learning disabilities.

Three Coalition trainers, Jessica Cassirer, Vesta Webster and Lisa Bre-schi-Almond, will be trained by the national organizations to present the four-day workshops, which will be offered in two sessions of two days each. All programs in surrounding areas will be invited to send a representative, and at a later date, similar workshops will be offered at NMCL regionals and individual program sites as well.

The NMCL considers learning disabilities one of the major challenges in improving reading skills. The allocation of time and resources to help programs serve L.D. learners will be a major focus for the NMCL for the next several months. We hope you and your learners will find these trainings worthwhile.



### **Fathers at SNMCF Read to Their Children** —submitted by Beverly Bien, Education Dept., SNMCF

In a joint effort with the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy and LVA-Dona Ana, the Education Bureau of the New Mexico Corrections Department is piloting a family literacy program at Southern New Mexico Corrections Facility (SNMCF) in Las Cruces. The program is for fathers of young children and is based on the *Storybook* program developed for incarcerated individuals in Illinois. A family literacy program for mothers has been in place for two years at the New Mexico Women's Correctional Facility in Grants, but this is the first *Storybook*-based literacy program offered to incarcerated fathers in an NMCD facility.

The program was implemented in Las Cruces in October 2000, and provides incarcerated fathers with the opportunity to connect with their children through reading. Age appropriate children's books are selected with staff input. Education staff provide one-on-one assistance so that inmates may have ample practice reading the stories before audio taping the selected readings. The audiotape, along with the selected children's book, is then sent home to the children.

The program reinforces the importance of reading for both the incarcerated fathers as well as for their children. Many of the fathers report that they have never before read a story to their children. Some will have to work hard to improve their literacy skills before creating their audiotapes. But the opportunity to create taped readings for their children is a strong incentive for incarcerated fathers to improve their reading skills.

Feedback from the inmates is already validating the importance of this program. One inmate who is participating in the program said that this was one of the most positive things he has done so far in prison. Another participant who is a beginning reader, said he "would practice and practice and even learn to read" in order to share books with his sons.



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it will go to the Senate Finance Committee, and then to the floor of the Senate. With luck, it will then have to make its way from House Education to House Finance,

and then to the floor of the House. If it passes that final vote, the Governor will then hopefully sign the legislation into law.

**Please contact your local legislators and urge them to support Senate Bill 4. It has the potential to make a big difference in the lives of adults attempting to become literate all over New Mexico.**

## Training Corner

<b>DATES</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>WHERE</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>PHONE #</b>
2/23, 24; 3/9, 10	LVA BL	LVA Cibola County	Trina Stephenson	285-5995
3/2, 3, 9, 10	LVA ESL	LVA Santa Fe	Letty Naranjo	428-1353
3/23, 24, 30, 31	LVA ESL	ReadWest Rio Rancho	Elizabeth Thomsen	892-1131
4/20, 21, 27, 28	LVA BL	TVI/LCA-ABQ	Donna Aragon	224-4313
(same dates)	LVA ESL		Sara Bellomo	266-7202
<b><u>SPECIAL WORKSHOPS/IN-SERVICES</u></b>				
2/17	LVA Learning Disabilities	LVA Socorro County	Barbara Romero	835-4659
2/22	LITSTART Workshop	TVI	Donna Aragon	224-7641
3/10	Learning Disabilities	LVA Doña Ana Co.– Las Cruces	Harry Pearson	527-7641