

Subj: **NVC 112613 OVAE's Regional PIAAC Discussions**  
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**NAEPDC**  
*News, Views, and Clues*  
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**OVAE's Regional PIAAC Discussions**

As mentioned in an earlier report, OVAE is embarking on a series of regional PIAAC discussions to seek input on options for responding to that report. The first one of those discussions was held in Washington, DC on November 20. Subsequent discussions will be held in Philadelphia, Chicago, Mississippi and Massachusetts.

The Washington discussion is archived so you can view it at your leisure. The URL for that archived session is in Jeff Carter's report on that session below.

The first of several planned "engagement sessions" to be held around the country over the next several months by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) took place here in Washington on November 20th. These sessions are part of an effort by the agency to gather input from the field as it puts together a plan of action in response to the PIAAC findings released a few weeks ago.

The event was webcast, and the video is archived here:

<https://community.lincs.ed.gov/notice/national-engagement-process-improve-skills-low-skilled-adults> (follow the link to the "archive").

In addition to introductory remarks from **Brenda Dann-Messier**, the program included a presentation from **Jack Buckley**, Commissioner, National Center for Education Statistics and **Johan Uvin**, OVAE's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Strategic Initiatives; as well as a few remarks and a little Q&A from **Arne Duncan**, U.S. Secretary of Education.

This was followed by a "reaction panel" discussion with the following individuals:

**Mark Greenberg**, Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; **Eric Seleznow**, Acting Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor; **Richard Laine**, Director, Education Division, National Governors Association; **Matthew S. Erskine**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development; and **Alejandra Ceja**, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

Honestly, there was not a lot new in any of the discussion above, (assuming you have read through OECD's report), but I encourage you to take a look at the video.

**There are two takeaways I wanted to draw to your attention:**

1. During Johan's presentation, he mentioned that PIAAC provided them -- "for the first time" -- with data on the "unmet demand for adult education services." They believe that **three million low skilled adults in the U.S. want to participate such services but did not have the opportunity to do so**, "due to capacity and other constraints." This is a significantly higher level of demand than, for example, the NCSDAE waiting list survey from a few years ago. I would expect an estimate of demand based on the PIAAC data to be higher than the number of people on waiting lists, but that is obviously *significantly* higher.

However, based on Johan's answer to my followup question about this, I believe the services he is speaking of include a much broader array of services than what we would think of as strictly adult education:

*"There were a number of questions that asked the individuals in the sample if they participated in various forms of learning over the last 12 months, and that included things like education leading to a certificate or a credential -- even things like on the job training and informal forms of leaning. What that showed was that the United states actually had a very high level -- relative to other countries -- of individuals participating in learning, but when we looked at this data by proficiency we noticed that those at the bottom of the skills distribution participated at much lower levels than those at the higher levels.*

*Those individuals were asked the question if they had sought opportunities to develop their skills, and if they were not able to participate what some of the reasons were. And that's how we were able to arrive at that estimate."*

This response is at around the 31:30 mark of the video.

All of which is a reminder to bear in mind that the PIAAC study and the OECD recommendations are not focused solely on adult education, but on skills generally, and thus concern *all* the programs under OVAE's purview, and many Labor programs as well. At any rate, I think we're going to hear a lot about the 3 million who are not able to access services over the next few weeks and months.

2. Interestingly, there was no mention of the **Connect2Compete** partnership Brenda mentioned during her presentation on November 12th. However, there was a new technology announcement, from **Michael Yudin**, Acting Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at ED. (Actually, now that the Senate has changed the filibuster rules, he may not be "acting" anymore!). Yudin said that he was entering into a new arrangement with the organization **Bookshare** ([www.bookshare.org/](http://www.bookshare.org/)) to provide adults with visual disabilities access to instructional materials.

The morning ended with 30 minutes of small group discussion and report-outs. I imagine there is a record of those report-outs but I don't have them. If/when I come across them I will pass them along.

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Keep up the good work. Let me know when we can help.

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*A Natural Resource For Adult Education State Directors and their Staff Members*

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