ABLE TRANSITIONS
COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE

OVERVIEW OF TRANSITIONS COLLABORATIVES:
Programs, Products and Process

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The Ohio ABLE Transitions Collaborative Framework was developed by the State ABLE Team, a program of the Ohio Board of Regents, with assistance from the State Leadership Network:

- Ohio Literacy Network
- Ohio Literacy Resource Center
- Northeast Resource Center
- Northwest Resource Center
- Southeast/Central Resource Center
- Southwest Resource Center
- ABLE Evaluation and Design Project, Center for Employment Training and Education (CETE), The Ohio State University (OSU)

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INTRODUCTION

The ten-year Strategic Plan for Higher Education developed by the Ohio Board of Regents for the University System of Ohio (USO) aims to raise the education level of Ohioans to promote job growth around the state. The Ohio Skills Bank aligns with the plan to seamlessly link adult education, workforce development and economic development. The Transitions Task Force, with assistance from the State Leadership Network, designed the Ohio ABLE Transitions Framework and launched the ABLE Transitions Collaborative Initiative in January 2009 to extend the goals of the USO and Ohio Skills Bank. This is accomplished by building capacity within local Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) Programs to assist students with transitioning to postsecondary education and training. The Initiative was supported by a two-year incentive grant received from the U.S. Department of Labor through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). It was awarded based on achievement of performance levels set by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and included the following objectives:

- Increase the number of adults accessing postsecondary education and training;
- Support the capacity of ABLE programs to better serve adults with postsecondary and employment goals through training and resource development;
- Align education systems, policies and processes to optimize implementation and institutionalization of career pathways; and
- Begin implementation of a Stackable Certificate Program through the issuance of pre-college and industry recognized certificates.

Transitions Framework

Professionals in nontraditional adult learning acknowledge their students often have different needs and aspirations than other students. Furthermore, these nontraditional students may require additional supports to achieve academic and workforce success. To meet the unique challenges faced by students, the ABLE Transitions Framework is organized around two components: instructional and support services. The framework is constructed broadly to encompass requirements of both postsecondary and career/workplace transitions. Each framework component is comprised of several elements that assist in meeting these requirements.

Instructional Services
- Develop and deliver instructional program that facilitates student transitions
- Implement contextualized curricula
- Model selected postsecondary facets combined with ABLE instructional delivery

Support Services
- Build awareness of postsecondary and work options
- Provide comprehensive goal setting activities
- Incorporate individual and group advising
• Provide comprehensive support services

ABLE Transitions Collaboratives were formed from the 12 Economic Development Regions of Ohio and were expected to address at least one element of either of the two framework components while developing region-specific models of transition. In fall 2008, ABLE programs completed an online gap analysis and then were asked to use a worksheet provided by the OSU ABLE Evaluation and Design Project to perform an analysis assessing their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for each program component. Following this activity, programs were organized by Economic Development Region, and a discussion of the needs assessment results was facilitated by the Ohio ABLE Resource Center Network at the Fall Director’s Meeting. These facilitated discussions were used to inform selection of project goals for each Collaborative.

Three of the 12 Economic Development Regions consisted of multiple Collaboratives to meet the needs of all local programs in 2008. As a result, sixteen Collaboratives applied for and participated in year one of the Initiative. Involvement was optional, and some ABLE programs chose not to participate in the Initiative. However, participation was encouraged, as it was predicted to increase the likelihood of programs adopting the key paradigm shift promoted by the Initiative. This shift calls for ABLE programs to transition from helping students to prepare for the GED to serving as a gateway for postsecondary education and training.

This overview contains a description of the strategy, activities, products and processes each Collaborative pursued. One of the most frequently cited benefits of this initiative has been the opportunity to work with and learn from other programs. This overview is provided at the request of the Ohio Board of Regents and the individual ABLE Transitions Collaboratives to promote the continued learning and sharing.
Region 1: Columbus A

Project Description
The EDR 1-Columbus A Collaborative focused on assisting students to develop the awareness, skills and confidence necessary to successfully transition to postsecondary education. To address these issues, the group created goprepared, a flexible framework of curriculum that could be tailored to meet the unique needs of individual ABLE programs. The goprepared coursework focuses on improving students' writing, math and technology skills as well as on helping participants assess their own readiness for postsecondary education or training. In addition, the structure of the program is designed to mirror a college course, with students participating in online discussions, creating PowerPoint presentations, receiving homework assignments, and being graded on their work. Lists of Collaborative-approved writing and math resources were provided so members could choose those that best suit their students. Marketing materials, including an goprepared website, were also developed to promote the Collaborative’s new courses and services.

Strengths of the project identified by participating ABLE programs included the model’s flexibility and its capacity for enabling students to assess their readiness for postsecondary coursework in a safe environment without financial or other penalties. Further, the goprepared curriculum can be integrated into the more rigorous ABLE classroom instruction to develop skills necessary for achieving higher-level ABLE benchmarks and GED test scores.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 1-Columbus A Collaborative included the following participants: Columbus City Schools, London ABLE, Columbus ABLE Consortium (Franklinton & Godman Guild), Tolles Technical, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, Pickaway County ESC and Delaware Area Career Center.

Because the second year of this project focused primarily on pilot implementation at individual sites, the group determined that face-to-face meetings were no longer necessary. Following an initial day of in-person professional development, this Collaborative primarily communicated via Ning, an online social network service used to share information and post documents. Each member also submitted monthly progress reports to the contact person and other Collaborative members via email to provide updates and share ideas. Since the Ning network plans to begin charging a fee within the next year, the EDR 1 - Columbus A Collaborative is considering moving the group’s contents to Nicenet, a similar free service.

For more information, please contact Barb Seib (BSeib3860@columbus.k12.oh.us).
Region 1: Columbus B

Project Description
The EDR 1 – Columbus B Collaborative focused on developing a workplace readiness program to meet the specific needs of unemployed and underemployed ABLE participants. The Career Assessment Battery was used to help participants identify jobs that fit their needs, interests and abilities, and the KET Workplace Essential Skills series provided key information about how to find and keep a job. Participating students learned how to look for work online, complete a résumé and conduct themselves professionally at an interview. In addition, the curriculum walked students through the steps necessary to apply for a job, including filling out job applications and developing a list of references as well as writing cover letters and thank you notes.

During the second year of the project, three ABLE sites implemented pilot versions of the work readiness program, and the TABE test was administered at the start and end of each. The Collaborative plans to further measure student satisfaction and potential employment impact by distributing three and six month follow-up surveys to participants.

Strengths of the project identified by participating ABLE programs included the development of a course of study addressing an unmet need for many ABLE students. In addition, the Collaborative specifically created the work readiness program to allow for flexibility. Individual sites tailored the pilot programs to meet the needs of their population, varying the topics covered, length of classes, and number of sessions. Overall, student response to the program has been positive and one site reported adding a second class to accommodate the higher than expected number of interested students.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 1-Columbus B Collaborative included the following participants: Columbus City Schools, Godman Guild Association, Eastland-Fairfield Career and Technical Schools, West Central Community Correctional Facility and Career & Technology Education Centers of Licking County C-TEC.

Because the majority of planning was completed during the first year of the project, the EDR 1 – Columbus B Collaborative found that they did not need to meet as frequently during the second year. Aside from two face-to-face meetings, the group primarily communicated via email and telephone calls. The group generally felt that the commitment level of members was high, that the facilitation of meetings was effective and that participants were open to discussing different options when making decisions.

For more information, please contact Tim Harry (tharry59@gmail.com).
Region 2: Perrysburg

Project Description
The EDR 2 - Perrysburg Collaborative focused on the development of a variety of products and practices designed to build a “bridge” from ABLE to an appropriate postsecondary program. Members utilized existing curricular resources to provide instruction aimed at the achievement of higher-level benchmarks. The Collaborative also provided members with professional development including WorkKeys training, promotional materials such as rulers and pencils, and a customizable tri-fold bridge-themed marketing brochure with an overview of the Stackable Certificates program, contact information for each of the participating programs, and other materials. Finally, members of this group developed a variety of creative strategies for assisting students to learn more about their postsecondary options and overcome common obstacles, including life/social skills training, guest speakers, campus tours, incentive scholarships, requirements set by specific programs, detailed information about financial aid, and contact people at various local community colleges. At least one Collaborative member also regularly offers classes and guest lectures about adult education programs at a local job placement center.

Strengths of this project self-identified by participating programs included increasing collaboration among ABLE programs and with postsecondary institutions as well as adopting the “bridge” metaphor for Collaborative marketing materials. According to members, students increasingly recognize that obtaining a GED is not the ultimate goal, but rather one step on the path to adult education. Members of this group also believe that a fundamental culture shift has occurred and that Transitions messages and opportunities have become embedded within their day-to-day efforts.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 2 Collaborative included the following participants: Fostoria City Schools, Owens Community College, Penta Career Center, Sandusky City Schools and Vanguard-Sentinel Adult Career Center. This Collaborative generally meets monthly, with the Co-Coordinators providing an agenda and informally facilitating the discussion. Members also report communicating regularly via email.

Participants expressed the opinion that “relationships are what really make it happen.” By developing closer relationships among ABLE programs, members report that their willingness to share has increased and that collaborating on marketing materials has saved both time and money. Similarly, increased mutual understanding of the ABLE programs and local postsecondary institutions has significantly reduced turf issues and streamlined efforts to schedule tours, bring in speakers and obtain community college scholarships for graduating GED students.

For more information, please contact Debbie Morris (dmorris@pentanet.k12.oh.us) or Kelly West (kwest@fostoriaschools.org).
Region 3: Lima

**Project Description**
In response to the establishment of higher-level benchmarks, the EDR 3 - Lima Collaborative decided to focus on providing ABLE staff with Transitions-related professional development opportunities. The purpose of these trainings was to help instructors better understand what students need to learn to meet these new standards and what proven strategies are available for addressing these specific learning objectives. Examples of topics covered included the upper level 5 and level 6 reading and writing benchmarks and the level 6 algebra benchmarks. A third workshop provided participants with the opportunity to develop a better understanding of the student experience by taking the WorkKeys career readiness assessment or the COMPASS college assessment. Approximately 40 people attended each workshop, and a survey of participants found a high level of satisfaction with the information covered, particularly related to the algebra workshop.

A strength of the project identified by participating programs is encouraging staff to take the WorkKeys and COMPASS tests. Since most instructors had no previous hands-on experience with these assessments, it is anticipated that taking the tests will improve their understanding of both the process and content, thereby enhancing their ability to advise students. Distribution of the National College Transitions Network (NCTN) Transitions Toolkit was also viewed as a positive outcome of this project. Overall, there is a perception that students increasingly understand the importance of obtaining advanced skills beyond the GED in order to obtain a good job.

**Membership and Process**
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 3 Collaborative included the following participants: Apollo Career Center, Lima City Schools, Owens Community College-Findlay Campus, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, and Putnam County Educational Service Center. The group meets at least once a month, often virtually via Elluminate to avoid the need for travel. Members also communicate informally via email and after some Ohio Skills Bank meetings and professional development workshops.

The development and strengthening of relationships was identified as an important outcome of this Collaborative. Although member programs had limited previous experience working together, they are now described as being “in constant contact,” and individual coordinators are seen as more willing to share resources and provide assistance to one another. ABLE programs are also seen as more able to provide up-to-date information on the steps necessary to pursue postsecondary goals: what programs are available, what requirements need to be met, and with whom to talk about taking the next step. Also, both ABLE and postsecondary institutions have developed a better understanding of how they can play complementary, rather than competitive, roles within the Transitions effort.

**For more information, please contact Eric Davis (edavis@limacityschools.or**
Region 4: Clayton

Project Description
The EDR 4 - Clayton Collaborative focused on developing an inclusive student support system, including career assessments, education and career goal setting and an overall increase in attention paid to postsecondary education and/or employment transitions by participating ABLE programs. To accomplish this goal, a Transitions Project coordinator was hired to help identify individual programmatic needs, gather information about local resources, interpret the Kuder Career System or Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) career assessment results and track programmatic outcomes. This individual also met with students one-on-one, in small groups or as a class to work on resumes and discuss Transitions-related issues. Finally, the Region 4 Collaborative also developed a career guide which the coordinator used to help students set short and long term transition goals. The career guide includes information about regional postsecondary education and training programs based on four high-demand employment areas: advanced manufacturing, aerospace, healthcare and integrated technology. At the time of the evaluation, an electronic version of the career guide had been distributed to participating programs and a hard copy version was being developed.

The flexibility of this project was identified as a strength by participating programs. The Coordinator focused on different student populations and varied her methods depending upon the needs of the individual sites. For example, some programs requested that she work directly with students, modeling new intervention and support strategies for existing staff. Other programs received materials and other forms of assistance from the Coordinator and utilized these resources to enhance their own interactions with students.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 4 Collaborative included the following participants: Miami Valley Career Technology Center, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, Springfield City Schools, Upper Valley JVS, Kettering City Schools and Greenville City Schools. Notably, a non-ABLE representative who works with the Stackable Certificates program also participated in the program over the past two years.

Because Collaborative members frequently crossed paths due to involvement in other projects or initiatives, this group met monthly during the first year but communicated primarily communicated by phone and email in year two. Members of the EDR 4 Collaborative have a history of working with each other as well as with postsecondary education institutions and employers. However, prior to this Initiative, programs were grouped by one of four ABLE regions. By working with others in the economic development region, programs report that they have established new partnerships and further expanded their community connections.

For more information, please contact Sharon Hampton (shampton@northridgeschools.org).
Region 5: Batavia

Project Description
The EDR 5-Batavia Collaborative focused on developing a Career Awareness Toolkit for use during the ABLE orientation process. The finished product includes 13 resources, such as career awareness surveys, assessment tools, and exercises to help students explore the requirements related to specific career paths. Following initial pilots of the material by Collaborative members, ABLE instructors and coordinators met to make modifications based on student and instructor feedback. Next, components of the Career Awareness Toolkit were piloted a second time, and evaluations were again reviewed to identify areas in need of improvement. At the time of the evaluation, the final version of the Career Assessment Toolkit was being completed, collated within binders and loaded onto flash drives. The group plans to offer a June professional development session to review the finished product with an estimated 36 ABLE instructors. Based on the Coordinator interview, this effort is perceived to have significantly increased instructors’ ability to assist students in identifying career goals that fit their interests and skills, as well as understanding the steps needed to achieve these goals.

Strengths of the project identified by members of the group included the flexible nature of the Toolkit which is designed to be tailored to the needs of specific programs and to allow instructors to select the individual resources that will work best with their students. In addition, the intensive piloting process utilized in the development of the Toolkit was identified as a best practice. Although this effort required a significant time commitment, members believe the repeated testing and reworking of the material resulted in a much stronger final product.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 5 Collaborative included the following participants: Cincinnati City Schools ABLE and their partners (including the YWCA, Urban Appalachian Council and River City Connections), Clermont County Educational Service Center and Hamilton City Schools ABLE.

The EDR 5 Collaborative met in person on a monthly basis, but also used phone conferencing and email as needed. Participating programs are described as working well together, and the group’s willingness to pitch in and provide each other with assistance was identified as playing a critical role in their successful completion of this project. Although the work of this Collaborative did not focus on developing new relationships with postsecondary schools, this is recognized as a critical need, both to smooth student transitions and to undermine the potential for ABLE programs to be perceived as competitors.

For more information, please contact Jimmi McIntosh (mcintosh_j@ccesc.org).
Region 6: Norwalk

Project Description
The EDR 6-Norwalk Collaborative focused on the development of contextualized curriculum that includes both academic and soft skills content. Based on the interests of ABLE students and the needs of the region, the group concentrated on careers in healthcare. They obtained the Medical Readiness Course of Study developed by the EDR 12 Collaborative, organized a task force of relevant educators and job development professionals to review the materials, and modified the curriculum based on feedback from this group. The new course was piloted by three member programs in May – June, 2010 and included topics such as medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, medical math and learning/study skills. In addition, the group offered a professional development workshop on how to use contextualized curriculum in the classroom. Approximately 30 instructors and administrators attended, including at least one representative of each program within the region. Finally, collaborative members also explored other strategies for facilitating students’ transition to postsecondary education, including campus tours, scholarships, guest speakers and assistance with the application process.

Strengths of the project identified by Collaborative members included the ability to overcome initial resistance and form productive partnerships with non-ABLE stakeholders. For example, some developmental education instructors at local community colleges were initially suspicious of the Transition effort but gradually came to understand that the two programs are targeting different students. As a result, many now actively refer students in need of more extensive remedial assistance to ABLE. A local community college LPN program even agreed to accept a version of this course as a substitute for one of its own prerequisites, provided that certain attendance and test score benchmarks are met.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 6 Collaborative included the following participants: Fostoria City Schools ABLE, Knox County Career Center, Mansfield City Schools, Marion Technical College, Norwalk City Schools ABLE, Vanguard-Sentinel Career Center and Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center. Meeting formats varied, with some being held in person and others conducted via phone conference and over the internet. Members also regularly communicated by email. Collaborative participants credited this Initiative with helping them develop stronger relationships, both with each other and with local postsecondary institutions. Although most had not worked together previously, an informal ABLE support network developed through which members discuss ideas, share best practices and brainstorm solutions to common challenges. This was viewed as particularly helpful for newer Coordinators, because they have the opportunity to learn from those with many years of ABLE experience.

For more information, please contact Donna Slack (slackd@norwalk-city.k12.oh.us) or Mary Lou Jacklin (marylou_j@treca.org).
Region 7: Piketon

Project Description
The EDR 7-Piketon Collaborative focused on preparing students to move beyond the GED by providing instructors with Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) professional development training and developing a Transitions Training DVD. Broken into a series of modules, this DVD is designed to guide students through the process of transitioning from the ABLE classroom to postsecondary education. Topics include how to find and apply to a college or technical school, how and when to apply for financial aid, how to prepare for placement tests, and how to study for success in the postsecondary environment. The Collaborative also worked with the ABLE Resource Center to create a paper regional resource guide for students, including local postsecondary contacts and financial aid information. Each program within this Collaborative also received six laptops and one projector for use in the classroom.

A strength of the project identified by participating programs has been an increased awareness among staff and students of local career and postsecondary options generated through use of professional development, OCIS software and the regional resource guide. Implementing the Transitions Framework brought the move from ABLE to employment, education or training to the forefront of services for the Collaborative. There is increased recognition that programs help students not only to increase basic academic skills and obtain their GED but also to also move to jobs and postsecondary institutions.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 7 Collaborative included the following participants: Buckeye Hills Career Center ABLE, Collins Career Center ABLE, Pickaway-Ross Career Technology Center ABLE, Pike County Career Technology Center ABLE, South Central ESC ABLE, and Southern State Community College ABLE.

The large, rural geographic area covered by this Collaborative limited in person meetings to two over the last year, and members primarily communicated via email. According to the Coordinator, participation in this Initiative has strengthened relationships among participants and increased their willingness to share ideas and resources. The group also hopes to continue to develop their relationship with OACHE and is optimistic that this is just the beginning of that partnership.

For more information, please contact Lathe Moore (Lathe.moore@adulted.pikectc.org).
Region 8: Concord Township

Project Description
The EDR 8-Concord Township Collaborative focused on expanding student services by hiring a Transitions Coordinator. This individual developed and presented monthly Transitions seminars at each of the four program sites, scheduled visits from representatives of regional postsecondary institutions, and met with students for individual advising sessions. The PowerPoint presentations created by the Transitions Coordinator have been provided for programs for continued use in the classroom. In addition, this Collaborative also hosted a professional development workshop on student-directed career and educational search strategies used by the Transitions Coordinator.

Strengths of the project identified by participating ABLE programs included the use of surveys to gather formative student feedback and the incorporation of this information into subsequent program planning efforts. Instructors generally responded positively to the Collaborative’s efforts, and members credit this Initiative with increasing overall interest in Transitions activities among both ABLE staff and students. Staff members are beginning to recognize that the Transitions Framework has to be a systematic part of their teaching, from using lesson plans to talking about jobs. Some programs have begun to enforce higher standards related to student punctuality and attendance while others are working with students to develop the advanced skills necessary to pursue postsecondary education and employment. Further, through this Initiative’s funding, the Collaborative was able to use experts in the field of career development and Transitions, which enhanced the quality of career services available to students.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by EDR 8-Concord Township Collaborative included the following participants: Auburn Career Center ABLE and Painesville ABLE.

This Collaborative primarily used email, face-to-face meetings and phone calls to conduct business. Because the majority of planning was completed during the first year, fewer meetings were held during the second year. However, at the time of the evaluation, the group was planning to gather again in June to evaluate their progress and discuss next steps. Collaborative members see this process as having strengthened links to local community colleges. These postsecondary schools have been very responsive to invitations to share their opportunities with ABLE students, and members anticipate continuing to develop stronger partnerships with regional postsecondary institutions and service agencies in the future.

For more information, please contact MaryAnn Kerwood (mkerwood@auburncc.org).
Region 8: Lorain County

Project Description
The EDR 8 – Lorain County Consortium focused on encouraging ABLE students to view postsecondary education as an attainable goal. To this end, the group developed a Transitions class as well as a series of mini-courses. The eight-week Transitions class was offered on the campus of Lorain County Community College and included content to help students prepare for the GED and COMPASS tests, overcome test anxiety, research career opportunities, explore financial aid options and understand how healthy lifestyle choices (such as budgeting, time management, and nutrition) contribute to postsecondary success. The three mini-workshops were offered at multiple sites and featured guest speakers who provided information about a particular skill (such as resume writing) or shared how they successfully overcame barriers similar to those faced by many ABLE students (such as a history of incarceration) to succeed in postsecondary education. In addition to these courses, the Consortium purchased transition-related curriculum for instructors, and is encouraging all ABLE classes to utilize a syllabus.

The Collaborative Coordinator identified the development of targeted Transitions programming as the primary strength of this project. As she described it, GED instructors do not have time during their weekly four hours of instruction to provide students with in-depth career research assistance or information about the lifestyle skills necessary to succeed in the more challenging environment of postsecondary education. Similarly, the mini-courses offer ABLE students an opportunity to see people similar to themselves who have successfully leveraged education to build a better life. By providing these realistic role models, the mini-courses help students truly believe that they can be successful. Finally, holding the Transition class on a college campus was seen as an additional strength of this project, allowing students to gradually become accustomed to the setting and to overcome transportation barriers prior to taking on the more challenging postsecondary coursework. The Coordinator quoted one student who said, “I would not have taken and passed the COMPASS test, gotten my GED or be enrolled in college if it weren’t for the Transitions class.”

Membership and Process
The three programs listed in the Year One implementation plan – the Lorain ABLE Program, Lorain County JVS Adult Career Center and Elyria Schools ABLE Program – have been consolidated into a single program operating as Lorain County Community College ABLE Consortium, and this consolidated program submitted the Year Two implementation plan. Although the Collaborative did not formally meet this year, communication via email and telephone continues to occur among the three original participants.

For more information, please contact Roberta Reinhardt (rreinhar@lorainccc.edu).
Region 8: Parma

Project Description
The EDR 8-Parma Collaborative focused on developing a central web location for resources related to postsecondary and workforce transition support services. To accomplish this, the group worked with Moodle, a free and open-source electronic learning platform. By the conclusion of the project’s second year, the Moodle resource guide included contact information for employment, postsecondary education and support services available in the region. In addition, the site provides access to multiple lesson plans about Transitions topics such as increasing personal and career awareness, writing a resume and understanding financial aid. Moodle users also have the ability to complete information technology exercises to increase their ability to use computers and the internet effectively.

The Advisory Committee organized a webinar for Collaborative members in May to help instructors and coordinators learn how to use the Moodle. The event was planned to tie into the ABLE Technology Initiative through the provision of webcams to participating programs. Attendees were also offered information technology support through the Collaborative’s web technician and asked to create two lesson plans incorporating use of the Moodle into their classrooms. At the time of the site visit, the group was planning a “meet-and-greet” for postsecondary education and support organizations included on the Moodle to meet with Collaborative members and staff to increase awareness and relationship-building.

Strengths of the project identified by participating ABLE programs included improved student and instructor access to useful Transitions information and resources. Further, Collaborative members report having a better understanding of how the Transitions Initiative links with other efforts occurring around the state, as evidenced by incorporation of the ABLE Technology Initiative into its work this year.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 8-Parma Collaborative included the following participants: Parma City Schools ABLE, Polaris ABLE, Lakewood ABLE, Westlake ABLE, Cleveland Heights-University Heights ABLE, Auburn Career Center ABLE, Euclid ABLE, Strongsville ABLE, Cleveland Metropolitan School District ABLE and Tri-C ABLE. This project was coordinated by an Advisory Committee whose members communicated via face-to-face meetings, email, phone calls and by posting documents and comments on the Moodle.

For more information, please contact Susan Sheehan (sheehans@parmacityschools.org).
Region 9: Akron

Program Description
Because of the diversity of its membership, the EDR 9 – Akron Collaborative focused on addressing shared goals while still accommodating the unique needs of individual programs. Each participating ABLE program conducted an independent SWOT analysis and, based on these results, developed tailored strategies for addressing Transitions goals. Some programs chose to strengthen their abilities to teach higher-level academic skills by developing new curricula, such as an advanced writing program or a science course that includes the use of applied math skills. One program created a website to provide students interested in postsecondary education with information about local colleges, financial aid, and potential careers. Another developed newsletters, fact sheets and weekly presentations on Transitions topics as well as organizing tours of postsecondary campuses and providing students with one-on-one assistance with financial aid forms and Transitions-related issues. At the time of the site visit, Collaborative members were planning a regional meeting with postsecondary institutions in June.

A strength of these projects identified by participating ABLE programs included the recognition that the ABLE student body is diverse and includes individuals with a wide variety of goals and needs. Further, Transitions messages are increasingly incorporated throughout ABLE programming, and Collaborative members report that students and ABLE instructors are slowly recognizing that obtaining a GED is no longer the end goal of adult education.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 9 Collaborative included the following participants: Canton City Schools, Maplewood Career Center, Massillon City Schools, Project Learn of Summit County and Wayne County Career Center. In addition to two in-person meetings, the EDR 9 Collaborative members communicated via email and by checking in with each other at statewide and regional meetings.

Members credit the EDR 9 Collaborative effort with increasing their awareness of each other’s programs and encouraging mutual sharing of information and assistance. In addition, some participating programs formed collaborative partnerships and tapped into new funding sources in ways that would not have been likely to occur without this Initiative. Some members also strengthened their relationships with local postsecondary institutions, which resulted in increased mutual understanding, student referrals and overall willingness to work together to ensure a smooth transition process.

For more information, please contact Rick McIntosh (mcintosh@projectlearnsummit.org).
Region 10: Steubenville

Project Description
Identifying the development of higher-level math skills as a critical transition component, the EDR 10 – Steubenville Collaborative focused on providing ABLE instructors with access to advanced math curriculum and related professional development opportunities. The group organized professional development sessions on upper level math instruction and lesson plan development. This information was used to develop a series of lessons targeting Level Six math benchmarks and covering topics such as measurement and geometry, algebra and patterns, and data analysis and probability. Collaborative members also provided students with access to 8 – 12 week higher-level math courses, in some cases teaching more advanced topics than postsecondary developmental education classes offered in the same building.

Strengths of the project identified by participating ABLE programs included a flexible approach that allowed individual programs to tailor the project to respond to the unique needs of their students. This enabled sites to purchase a variety of materials to enhance math instruction including laptops, specialized whiteboards, math books, and materials to teach math skills from a healthcare perspective. In addition, Collaborative members see their advanced math lesson plans as an outcome that addresses a critical educational gap, builds on the experience of long-term ABLE coordinators, and can be shared with ABLE programs throughout the state. Finally, participants felt positively about efforts to structure Transitions classes to mirror the postsecondary experience (meeting on a college campus, providing students with a syllabus and managing enrollment so classes have a set start and end date).

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 10 Collaborative included the following participants: Ashland County/West Holmes Career Center ABLE, Buckeye Career Center ABLE, Columbiana County ABLE, Coshocton County ABLE, Jefferson County ABLE and Mid-East Career & Technical Center ABLE. This Collaborative communicated via email and met regularly in-person, either in conjunction with other meetings or for professional development/work sessions.

Heightened camaraderie and networking among participating ABLE programs were identified as positive outcomes of the project. In addition, each program developed or strengthened its relationship with at least one postsecondary institution. This has increased communication and referrals, resulting in a smoother student transition process overall. For example, those in charge of placement testing for at least one postsecondary institution are now referring students who need to improve their scores directly to ABLE for assistance. In turn, individual ABLE programs are developing strategies that support and reinforce these efforts (such as providing these students with a ticket that allows the COMPASS college placement test to be retaken for free).

For more information, please contact Jacqueline McCoy (jmccoy@jcc.edu).
Region 11: The Plains

Project Description
Members of the EDR 11 - The Plains Collaborative focused on enhancing existing student support services. The group launched a new web-based directory to assist adult learners to explore career and educational options. The website includes information about area postsecondary institutions, apprenticeship programs, financial aid, scholarships, loans, support services and county directories. In addition, each participating program received five student laptops to facilitate classroom activities, advising and web-based research. Each program also made efforts to expand student support activities by coordinating site visits with representatives from postsecondary institutions, holding FAFSA counseling sessions, coordinating with Job and Family Services and/or organizing a “College Success Day” workshop. Finally, to improve the math skills of both ABLE students and instructors, the EDR 11 Collaborative utilized Carnegie Learning math instructional software and offered higher-level math professional development for ABLE instructors and administrators.

Strengths of the project identified by participating ABLE programs included encouraging students to be more focused on goal-setting and more aware of the support available to help them achieve these goals. As a result, students seem to be more inclined to view the program as a resource and are less intimidated by the prospect of postsecondary education or apprenticeship programs. In addition, providing the participating correctional facility with laptops was seen as a successful strategy for increasing inmate access to educational and career information.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 11 Collaborative included the following participants: the Work Station/ABLE, Athens-Meigs Educational Service Center, Gallia-Jackson-Vinton JVSD-ABLE, Mid-East Career and Technology Centers-ABLE, Perry-Hocking Educational Service Center and SEPTA Correctional Facility. An ABLE staff member provided by the Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Agency for the Hocking County One-Stop also participated in this Collaborative.

The Collaborative primarily used face-to-face meetings and email to conduct business. Each program submitted monthly progress reports to the contact person to provide updates, and members used the face-to-face meetings to build relationships, learn about other ABLE programs, and share implementation strategies. The group plans to continue meeting to share ideas and solve problems. Members suggest the Initiative has been particularly helpful in building awareness about ABLE in postsecondary institutions, and some participating programs collaborated with local postsecondary institutions to submit an innovation grant proposal to the State ABLE program.

For more information, please contact Joe McGowan at (mcgowj@odjfs.state.oh.us).
Region 12: Jefferson

Project Description
To better prepare students for post-secondary education in health-related fields, the EDR 12 - Jefferson Collaborative developed a Medical Readiness Course of Study. This curriculum includes traditional academic topics such as math, writing, and anatomy as well as information on learning styles, study strategies, test-taking skills, online research, and more. For instructors, the materials include tips for implementing the course and sources of additional resources on a wide variety of topics. Following its completion, the Medical Readiness Course of Study was piloted multiple times in various settings, and interested ABLE instructors were provided with access to the curriculum and related professional development training.

Strengths of the project identified by participating ABLE programs included working with an experienced curriculum professional to develop the course, requesting early input from postsecondary instructors regarding course content and structure; and utilizing pilot participant feedback to make final adjustments to the materials. The result is a flexible collection of units that can be modified to meet the specific needs of a particular program and that consistently receive high student satisfaction ratings. Both faculty and students credit the course, particularly the math and study skills components, with improving post-secondary retention rates.

Membership and Process
The implementation plan submitted by the EDR 12 Collaborative included the following participants: ABLE programs of Ashtabula County JVS, Community Corrections Association, Trumbull County Training Center and Youngstown City Schools. Since the second year of the project focused on piloting the curriculum, the group primarily maintained contact via email and occasionally through face-to-face discussions at Stackable Certificate meetings.

Collaborative members suggest an additional outcome of this Initiative has been developing and strengthening new relationships, both among ABLE programs and with postsecondary instructors. Due to geographic distance and time constraints, participants did not previously know each other well, but now report that they are familiar with each other’s programs and feel comfortable sharing information and materials. They anticipate the group will remain in contact and continue to work together in the future. In addition, the process of developing and implementing the Medical Readiness Course has led to better relationships with postsecondary instructors in related fields, who now have a better understanding of ABLE and the supportive services available to their students.

For more information, please contact Jeff Seth at (ableadmin@suite224.net).