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ABC's of Investing in Adult Literacy Education

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A - An investment in adult literacy education usually produces "double duty dollars," meaning a dollar spent for adult literacy education usually produces many dollars of returns on investment in improved productivity at work, at home, in the schools and in the community.

B - Better educated parents tend to produce better educated children.

C - Childhood education and adulthood education are part of the "life cycles" of education; adults' education produces an intergenerational transfer of language and literacy to their children.

D - Developing integrated basic skills and workplace skills programs is a cost-effective way to increase higher paying job prospects in welfare-to-work programs.

E - Educating adult literacy students has been found to improve self-esteem, motivation to learn, and overall mental health; thus cost-effectively providing health outcomes along with literacy.

F - Federal funding for adult literacy education does not exceed \$220 per student while funding for Head Start exceeds \$6,000 per student, K-12 exceeds \$6500 per student and higher education exceeds \$16,000 per student. This is unfair and unjust.

G - Globalization of work means that America's workforce will need to compete with workforces around the world, and adult workplace literacy programs can help workers acquire new levels of skills as new demands arise.

H - Health literacy programs can produce increases in adults' understanding of medical problems before they become critical and contribute to medical cost-savings.

I - Intergenerational transfer from parents to their children of motivation for learning has been found to occur when adults are involved in literacy programs.

J - Just-in-time basic skills education in workplaces has helped adults retain and advance in jobs that would have been lost to foreign competition.

K - Knowledge development is as important as skill development, and faster to achieve, in adult literacy programs that focus on helping adults meet daily demands for reading, writing, and mathematics in functional contexts.

L - Literacy education in adulthood has been found to be an important contributor to the success of pre-school programs of literacy development in early childhood.

M - Military services have valued adult literacy education since General George Washington ordered chaplains at Valley Forge to convert an old hospital into a classroom and use it to teach the ABC's to illiterate soldiers.

N - Navy research near the turn of the 21st century found that each dollar invested in academic (basic) skills training returned \$14-\$22 dollars in recruitment and training savings.

O - Organizational effectiveness in the areas of recruitment, training, job placement, job promotion, and job productivity has been found in cases where workplace literacy programs have been initiated.

P - Promoting the Adult Education and Literacy System (AELS) of the United States ought to be a major undertaking for communications media, business and industry, and educators at all levels because of the many benefits that this system provides.

Q - Quantitative and qualitative data from research across the last century show that adults can be learn to read, write, compute, and develop functionally relevant knowledge and that this knowledge and skill has contributed to the growth of democracy in our nation.

R - Renewed commitment to adult literacy education by our federal and state policymakers will return itself in greater national achievements in the education of children and the increased global competitiveness of the American workforce.

S - Social inclusion with increased social justice requires that investments in adult literacy education be increased from present poverty levels to levels comparable to the other components of our national education system.

T - Training programs that help under-educated adults move more quickly from poverty or working poor into well paying jobs are possible using cost- effective, functional context designs in which basic skills and job skills education are integrated together into coherent, supportive, developmental programs.

U - Under-educated adults without high school degrees in the United States number in the tens of millions and are presently under-served by a grossly under-funded and marginalized education system. Policymakers need to provide funds to move this educational system from the margins to the mainstream of education.

V - Volunteers have served adults in need of literacy training ever since our nation's beginnings and they continue to serve today. But the services of hundreds of thousands of volunteers need to be reinforced by even greater numbers of full time, paid teachers if the United States is to fully meet the needs for lifelong learning and transfer across life cycles in this more complex age.

W - Women's literacy education is of special importance because research shows that better educated women have fewer children, get better pre-natal and post-natal care, have more full-term babies, send children to school better prepared to learn, and produce greater numbers of secondary school and college graduates.

X - Xenophobia, i.e., fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners, is being fought every day in the Adult Literacy and Education System of the United States by tens of thousands of teachers in programs for both native born and immigrant adults. Better educated adults are less fearful and more accepting of others and this is conducive to better community safety and harmony.

Y - Young adults who are positioned to become parents and who are school dropouts or just poorly educated in the basic skills can receive literacy education and thereby improve not only their own life chances but those of their children when they arrive. Adult literacy education is a form of early childhood education that starts even before children are conceived.

Z - Zest and Zeal for life, greater health, wealth, social inclusion, social justice, family devotion, greater concern for and caring for the diversity of humanity and a greater chance for success in the pursuit of happiness. All these are the realities as well as the intangibles resulting from adult literacy education.

SUPPORT THE ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY SYSTEM TODAY!

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