



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

SEP - 1 2005

Ms. Diane Rath  
Chair and Commissioner Representing the Public  
Texas Workforce Commission  
101 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 638  
Austin, Texas 78778-0001

Dear Ms. Rath:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Margaret Spellings in which you raised an issue related to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). We appreciated hearing your views on this issue. Your letter was referred to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, and I am pleased to respond.

The issue of foreign language instruction in academic subject areas, such as preparing adults to take the Spanish version of the GED, is an issue that has been under study by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education. However, we do not plan to issue a policy on whether or not Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds can be used to provide foreign language instruction in academic content areas. That is a state issue to be resolved at the state level.

Some states have taken positions and issued policies on the issue since, under AEFLA, they have broad authority to make policies with respect to adult education programs in areas not governed by federal policymaking. While federal resources that support AEFLA are limited, states have the authority to set priorities for the use of federal adult education funding they receive. The Texas Education Agency's policy regarding the use of AEFLA funds to prepare adults to take the Spanish version of the GED is a reasonable interpretation of the statute.

It is very important for the local workforce boards to continue to work closely with adult education partners. In Texas, as elsewhere across the states, obtaining the necessary skills to get and keep a job is critical to employment for younger workers. I agree that earning a high school diploma or a GED certificate is an important step in obtaining or advancing on a job. Learning English language skills is equally important to assist workers to communicate and work safely on the job. We applaud the integration of vocational training, basic education, and English language skills as a critical component of the strategy to meet the employment needs of job seekers in Texas. Gainful employment is important to our young job seekers as well as the state's economy.

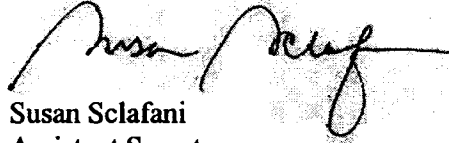
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I appreciate knowing your views on this issue and hope that this letter is helpful to you in answering the questions you have posed. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Scalfani", written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Susan Scalfani  
Assistant Secretary