Time for the U.S. to Reskill
National Engagement Process
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What Is PIAAC?
Survey of Adult Skills – In brief

166 thousand adults...
Representing 724 million 16-65 year-olds in 24 countries/economies

... took an internationally agreed assessment...

in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments.

Also surveyed were generic skills such as collaborating with others and organising one’s time, and how adults use their skills

(**see notes A and B in the Reader’s Guide).
PIAAC: The Survey of Adult Skills

• Administered in 2011-12 in 24 countries
• 16- to 65-year-olds, non-institutionalized, residing in the country, irrespective of nationality, citizenship, or language status
• Laptop computer or paper-and-pencil:
  • In the U.S., 80% took the computer tests and 15% took the paper-and-pencil tests.
• Conducted in English in the U.S.:
  • Background survey in English or Spanish. About 4% could not complete the questionnaire because of language difficulties or learning or mental disabilities, and 1% could not complete it for other reasons.

The U.S. Sample
• Wave 1: 5,000 individuals ages 16-65
• Wave 2: Adds 5,000 individuals (in 2015) to expand sample with
  • Unemployed adults (16-65)
  • Young adults (16-34)
  • Older adults (66-74)
  • Incarcerated adults (16-74)
What Does PIAAC Tell Us?
Summary of U.S. Results

- Below international average in all subject areas
- Ranked better in literacy than in numeracy or problem solving in technology-rich environments
- Higher percentage at low proficiency levels than international average
- Percentages of top performers similar to or slightly lower than international average, depending on the subject
- Performance gap between young and older population smaller than the average gap internationally
U.S. Rankings Internationally

Source: Time for the U.S. to Reskill?
The U.S. Has a Very Large Low-skilled Population

Source: IES Presentation
Literacy Skills in Younger and Older Generations

Average 16-24 year-olds

- **KOREA**: Score
- **US**: Score
- **Norway**: Score
- **Germany**: Score
- **Spain**: Score
- **France**: Score
- **Finland**: Score

Average 55-65 year-olds

- **UK**: Score

Score range:
- 240 to 295
Time for the U.S. to Reskill?  
*What the Survey of Adult Skills Says*  
OECD
Who Are the Low Skilled in the U.S.?

- One-third are under 35 years.
- One-third are immigrants.
- More than half are black or Hispanic.
- Two-thirds of young low-skilled adults (16-24) are men, with the difference reversing among older age groups.
- Three out of ten report “fair” to “poor” health.
- Nearly two-thirds work, but they earn low wages.
1. “...improve basic skills and tackle inequities.”
2. “Strengthen initial schooling for all....”
3. “Ensure effective and accessible education opportunities for young adults...”
4. “Link efforts to improve basic skills to employability...”
5. “Adapt to diversity.”
6. “Build awareness of the implications of weak basic skills [and the] links with other social factors...”
7. “Support action with evidence.”
What Is the Administration Doing About This Problem?
Skills Are Everybody’s Business

• National Engagement Process
  • Education in partnership with Labor, Health and Human Services and Commerce.
  • Five regional sessions (Completed).
  • Series of stakeholder focus groups (Ongoing).
  • Multiple state and local engagement sessions (Tool Kit).

• National Action Plan
  • To be released in spring 2014.
  • Will include game changing action items to expand access, promote equity, improve quality, and increase effectiveness.
  • Will reflect shared responsibility of various stakeholder groups in implementing the plan.
How Are Mayors Making a Difference?
Mayoral Leadership Matters

• Approximately 20 cities have strategic initiatives or targeted investments to improve the foundation skills of residents.

• **U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM)**

  USCM adopted a [resolution](#) at their 81st Annual meeting in July 2013 supporting adult education opportunities through the reauthorization and funding of the Workforce Investment Act.

Steps Mayors Have Taken/Can Take

• Convene all stakeholders in public and private sectors.
• Create a plan.
• Allocate resources.
• Launch a campaign.
• Start an initiative.
• Leverage, redirect, and/or align resources.
• Other.

What Have You Done or Can You Do?