



COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION

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ECCLI Forums Share “Lessons Learned”

The Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative (ECCLI) hosted its first of four Nursing Home Administrator Forums last month at Heritage Hall East in Agawam. In partnership with local Workforce Investment Boards, the forums are geared toward fostering collaboration among members of the long-term care industry. By featuring nursing home administrators and project coordinators that have been pioneers with the ECCLI programs in their facility, the forums are an opportunity for other nursing home administrators across the state to hear first hand the successes and challenges of implementing an ECCLI project. Topics discussed included innovative

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Panelists at the Waltham ECCLI forum are, left to right, Linda Cornell, Shawntsi Baret-Stone, and Gregg McCutcheon.

CYDE Will Open Four New Alternative Schools

Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter School of North Adams (BART), the New York City Office of New Schools Development, and the Providence Public Schools have created new alternative high schools that emphasize personalized learning, as a result of grants announced by Commonwealth Corporations Center for Youth Development and Education (CYDE).

Next September, North Adams, New York City and the Providence Public Schools will open small schools based

on the Diploma Plus model—providing another path to graduation for more than 300 students in each of the respective communities. BART will feature an interdisciplinary curriculum based on the fine arts and technology; Brownsville Academy in Brooklyn, NY, will offer a three-year, project-based experience for older youth. The Providence Public Schools will open a school similar to their well-regarded Feinstein school, but with the enriched senior year components of Diploma Plus.

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CYDE Alternative Schools

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The funding to support these schools came from a \$4.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that Commonwealth Corporation received to help create a nationwide network of alternative high schools based on their proven Diploma Plus model. By offering all students rigorous coursework and supportive relationships, these schools are intended to help more at-risk youth graduate from high school and transition to college prepared to succeed.

Diploma Plus challenges youth to meet high standards while providing support and guidance along the way. Academic work features active learning and student portfolios that allow youth to “show what they know,” and progress through demonstration of competency, not “time-in-seat.” In addition, the model features an enriched senior year experience during which students participate in community action projects, private sector internships and college classes.

These smaller, more personalized alternative schools are designed to offer opportunities to young people who may otherwise fall through the cracks. Studies show that students in small high schools (300 students or less) pass more courses, graduate, and go on to college in greater numbers than those in large schools. These positive outcomes appear to be greatest for low-income and minority students.

“With education options, all young people have the opportunity to achieve new levels of academic success and contribute to the health of our society,” said Kyle Miller, program officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “Through Diploma Plus, we can reverse sagging graduation rates and ensure that many more youth are prepared for, transition to and succeed in post-secondary education.”

ECCLI Forums

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ways to improve quality of care, ways to retain staff, and keys to building employees’ skills.

“The goal of these forums is to begin the process of sharing lessons learned from the ECCLI project. We hope to increase the number of nursing homes that are in the ECCLI fold,” said Carol Kapolka, ECCLI Project Director at Commonwealth Corporation.

More ECCLI forums were held in different parts of the state throughout the month of December.



Panelist Katyana Ballantine (left) shares her experiences at the ECCLI forum held in Waltham. Also pictured are panelists Donald Gregory (center) and Carol Kapolka (right).

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