OTAN Outreach and Technical Assistance Network
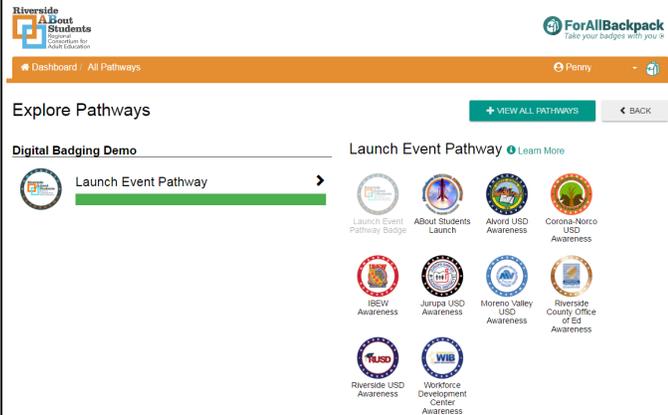*for Adult Educators*

Badge Launch at Riverside About Students April 19th 2017

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The Digital Badges launch event showcased the work of the Riverside ABout Students Consortia members and partners who spent the last year working and collaborating on a system-wide implementation of a digital badging program for adult education programs. The origins of this project came as a solution to the challenges of AB86 - to collect student data from all members and partners in the region as well as to create a seamless transition for students from adult education to careers or to college. Additionally, it created pathways into postsecondary education and the workforce by providing a uniform set of credentials learners can share with potential employers or college admissions offices.

In April of 2016, the badging implementation team came together to learn about digital badging and its potential to meet the needs of our learners. In August, the team presented their findings to the consortium members. Through membership feedback, the team did additional research leading them to Dr. Karen Jeffery of ForAllRubrics and Dr. Steve Regur of Educators Cooperative. Dr. Jeffery and her team created the platform for digital badging of the adult education program areas as well as an Open Backpack system for lifelong learners. With the support of CNUSD Educational Technology Director Dr. April Moore, Dr. Regur and his team designed the implementation plan for the project.

The team worked to ensure several features were included within the program. First, the badging system is aligned to CASAS scores. When learners met the prescribed CASAS scores, the badging platform automatically issues the corresponding badge to the student's digital backpack. Each pathway has defined what these assessment thresholds are, so as learner assessment data is reported, no additional work by teachers or office staff is required. Additionally, the functionality of the system provides a single-sign-on option not only for the badging system, but also for any other online curriculum product consortia partners may use. This streamlines the learners' ability to access online curriculum and their digital badge backpack. With students' permission, administrators and teachers can easily view learner progress and badges earned. When requested by employers, a system wide message can go out to qualified learners, for example, those who have earned their OSHA safety badge would get a message that a potential employer is interested in their skills.

The team utilized resources within the membership to create badge designs for English as a Second Language, Citizenship, Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, GED and High School Diploma, and Career Technical Education classes in CPR/First Aid and OSHA Safety Training.

The designs were approved, the digital badging platform developed and refined, so by April 2017, the team was ready to launch digital badging for adult learners within the Riverside ABout Students Consortium. Next steps include training more teachers about the digital badging platform and ensuring the necessary data reporting works as planned. At the launch event, the teachers, consortia partners, and administrators all showed a great deal of enthusiasm for digital badges to help learners meet their goals, and share their accomplishments with potential employers.

The development and deployment of this project may have great potential for adult education agencies as it is a way to track learner progress, recognize learner achievement, and connect employers and well qualified potential employees together within a community.

For more information contact JoDee Slyter, Regional Director of the About Students Consortium.