

Literacy Needs Assessment for Madison County



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Many thanks to all the organizations and individuals in Madison County who talked with us about their work and their dreams for future where high levels of literacy are an accepted and expected community norm. Your time is valuable and your contributions to this report helped frame both the issues and the recommendations.

Thanks also to the Central New York Community Foundation for its support, understanding of the pervasive effects of low literacy and for its vision for a better future. The Oneida Public Library's support was invaluable for setting up site visits, focus groups and interviews. Thank you!



Senator Valesky read to children recently during New Woodstock Library's story hour.

PREPARED BY:

LITERACY POWERLINE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE ISSUE

Madison County is a rural community of small towns and farms located between Syracuse and Utica, New York. As an upstate New York community it has the benefits of country living and the proximity to urban amenities.

Madison County is challenged, however, by a silent crisis: 5,500 of Madison County adult residents live with low literacy skill. Many are unable to use a bus schedule effectively, calculate change at a restaurant, complete a job application or read the information on a prescription bottle. This crisis severely limits Madison County's potential for future growth and prosperity.



“Literacy is a tool; a tool that allows a person a degree of freedom to make a conscious, informed, personal decision about themselves.”

Richard Mitchell, Madison-Oneida BOCES

The U.S. Census Bureau (2006) estimates the current Madison County population as 70,197. 16.7% of that population has not yet completed a high school diploma or its equivalent. The recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy Report (2009) estimates 10% of the Madison County adult population functions *below* the basic level, which indicates they have only the most simple and concrete literacy skills (see appendix 4 for definition). These 5,520 individuals need adult literacy services. Thousands more individuals need continued skill development to advance in the workforce.

Yet adult education programs surveyed for this report serve only 250 adult learners or approximately 4.5% of those who could benefit from the services.

NATIONAL LITERACY SCENE

New York State bears the unfortunate distinction of having the lowest literacy levels in the country along with California (see page).

Over 80 literacy coalitions across the country are working to raise their community's literacy levels. Many work with Literacy Powerline to strengthen this literacy movement. They reach the following conclusions about the results of effective adult literacy education:

Positive Increases	Challenging Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lifelong learning focus• Accountability and impact measurement• National attention from key stakeholders• Funder interest, affinity network formed• High level leadership in coalition governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quantity & quality of services are not meeting the need• Marketing efforts are fragmented• Business collaborations are just beginning• K-12 partnerships are inadequate• Fund development is uncoordinated

This report provides the data needed to focus attention on literacy needs *across the lifespan*. The needs assessment focuses specifically on Madison County's special strengths and weaknesses, the service gaps, the issues, and the community suggestions for increasing literacy in the county.



*"I believe that literacy and the joy of reading
could and should be shared by all."*

Stephanie Manion, YMCA

FINDINGS

81 people participated in the needs assessment process, providing a broad array of knowledge and expertise related to literacy and the community.

While some of the identified problems were unique to a particular group or agency; a core set of challenges emerged that cut across the lifespan and are addressed in the recommendations. These challenges include:

1. **Fragmentation of the service delivery system.** Fragmentation prevents strategic resources from being directed to the areas of greatest need and inhibits collaboration among service providers. The lack of communication between funders and service providers creates an additional barrier. Without such collaborations, effective strategies to develop a skilled workforce are impossible. For example, employers are concerned that employees do not have requisite skills needed for jobs, especially in math, yet schools are not regular partners in discussions. Cross-sector issues, such as innovative and flexible transportation, are rarely approached from multiple perspectives.
2. **Need for a literacy service infrastructure.** Such an infrastructure brings affordable/accessible and technologically-relevant training opportunities to both professional and volunteer providers. It increases the type and number of literacy offerings and the ability to track change in student's learning at the program and community level.
3. **Inability to recruit and retain learners.** The stigma of low literacy and the corresponding feelings of shame and embarrassment are significant barriers to learner recruitment. The community does not hear the message that learning is a life-long process and a necessary component to change.
4. **Literacy has not been consciously infused into all learning venues.** Social service, after school, recreation, arts and sports programs can all play a role in strengthening community literacy. Infusing literacy into health and financial programs/activities is essential to an improved quality of life. Computer literacy -- together with health and financial literacy - is especially needed among senior citizens, who are a significant growth segment of Madison County's population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Create a community literacy plan** to set goals and targets to make Madison County a highly literate and employable community. Priority attention should be given to the following:
 - a. Madison County residents who live in poverty
 - b. Early childhood and kindergarten preparation
 - c. Transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten
 - d. Workplace and vocational literacy programs
 - e. Numeracy education
 - f. Senior literacy
 - g. Health literacy services and networks.
 - h. Financial literacy services
 - i. Computer literacy
 - j. Services for those newly released from prison
2. **Develop a literacy coalition** to coordinate decision making and implementation of the community literacy plan. The coalition would support the community in the following early actions:
 - a. Develop quality indicators to assess performance
 - b. Implement centralized tracking of student outcomes to measure impact
 - c. Establish evaluation and accountability practices
 - d. Identify key intervention points (kindergarten readiness, fourth grade, transition to middle school, eighth grade, adult) and coordinate response
 - e. Develop a centralized literacy information and referral system
 - f. Coordinate fund development activities including:
 - i. Applying for New York State Department of Education Literacy Zone grant
 - ii. Identifying and securing public and private funding
 - iii. Infusing literacy (creating a “literacy screen”) for local funding practices

- iv. Identifying and replicating partnerships that have successfully secured funds to allow literacy programs to serve greater numbers of learners
- v. Creating opportunities for literacy service providers to collaborate with non-literacy organizations to leverage additional funds and foster partnerships to provide complementary services
- vi. Targeting funds made available through large national foundations that have identified literacy as a funding priority
- vii. Securing resources for earlier interventions based on community indicators

3. Launch a hard-hitting public awareness campaign:

- a. Bring together marketing leaders of the community to create a public awareness and advocacy plan
- b. Design and launch community messages for recruitment of learners, volunteers and donors
- c. Develop an on-line literacy provider directory

4. Build the capacity of literacy providers to serve more students more effectively:

- a. Create a literacy providers network
- b. Provide high-quality professional development, curriculum and instructional techniques to providers at all levels
- c. Increase the number of family literacy programs available
- d. Identify effective transportation strategies (i.e. support an increase in the volunteer base, trip-specific transportation for education and funding support for innovative programs such as Community Action Partnership's model).
- e. Introduce creative opportunities for scheduling classes in accessible locations and at times convenient to students
- f. Provide distance learning
- g. Increase childcare programs in adult literacy locations
- h. Support additional training of childcare providers to help parents support children's learning
- i. Increase training to home-based and group childcare programs

- j. Create a systematic communications/transition plan between early child care centers, parents and kindergarten teachers to communicate kindergarten standards and expectations
- k. Build literacy learning environments with ample pre-reading support materials
- l. Create universal pre-kindergarten in Madison County
- m. Increase the numbers of volunteers trained to read to children

5. Develop a coordinated literacy infrastructure:

- a. Increase the number of adult students who are recruited, retained, and complete their course of study
- b. Formalize and streamline the path from school to college and work for ease of access and navigation by learners
- c. Analyze results of students' experience and publish results for the community

6. Strengthen the literacy component of community programs

- a. Infuse literacy into health, finance, job-training, faith-based, and school-based programs;
- b. Assist community organizations in developing literacy-based curricula

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Not only does improved literacy pay huge dividends in quality of life but the dollars and cents add up, too:

- By increasing high school graduation rates, each graduate will earn on average \$267,000 more than a non-graduate over a lifespan
- By reducing the number of people receiving welfare support, there is a savings of \$127,000 in the cost of a person's welfare support over a lifespan
- By increasing vocational information and skills training, more people will embark on a career ladder rather than get stuck in a dead end, low paying job
- By infusing literacy goals into non-literacy programs, Madison County will grow its capacity to serve learners at little additional cost.
- By increasing literacy levels unnecessary, health care expenses that are attributable to low literacy will be reduced nationally by \$73 billion annually.
- By partnering on education and training for inmates and re-entry programs, formerly incarcerated people will be able to earn family-supporting incomes.
- By developing a culture of literacy, Madison County will build high expectations, high quality programs and high quality results

CALL TO ACTION

In the Twenty-first Century, individuals require sophisticated skills to achieve personal and economic advancement, to meet the demands of more difficult and technical jobs, to navigate confusing health and financial systems and to help their children gain skills for success in an increasingly complex future. Because communities are composed of individuals, community success depends upon individual success. Therefore barriers to individual literacy must be viewed as a challenge for the whole community. The creation of a Madison County Literacy Coalition is a powerful start to this process. Local leaders who call the community to action will elevate the issue and find creative and effective solutions. A comprehensive literacy initiative is a major investment that brings about a highly skilled workforce and a prosperous, informed community.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Central New York Community Foundation commissioned this report to estimate literacy levels in the area, identify the need for increased literacy and assess the possibilities for change. The foundation has recognized low literacy as a critical issue in development of Madison County.

Literacy providers, by themselves, have been unable to reverse the low literacy status of Madison County residents, despite many years of hard work. This Needs Assessment, conducted by Literacy Powerline, identifies the barriers to success and makes recommendations that will guide implementation of a regional plan. Literacy Powerline, a nationwide consulting network, assists communities in assessing local needs, building community literacy plans and developing strong coalitions that positively impact people's lives and communities.

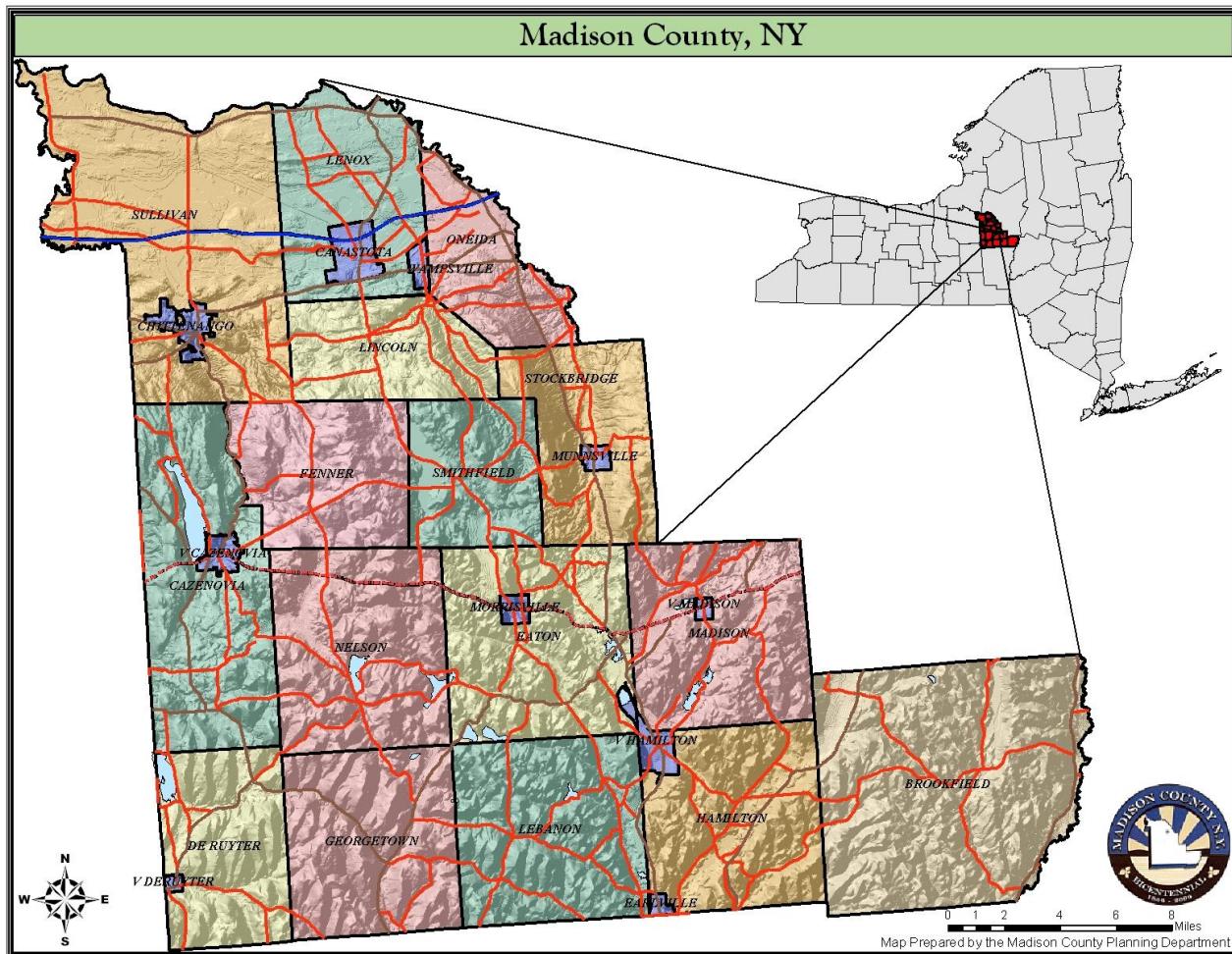


“More parents should take an active role in the learning process of their children or significant other. Knowing how to read is extremely important.”

*Glenn Osterhout, Future Farmers of America,
Madison Central School District*

INTRODUCTION

Madison County is located in Upstate New York in a primarily rural area with Oneida being the largest city. The county is part of the Syracuse Metropolitan Statistical Area. The county is identified by attractive countryside, small towns and family farms. There are two distinct parts of the county - Lake Oneida and the flat area to the north and the higher plateau land to the south. The county seat is Wampsville.



Madison County boasts good school districts, successful businesses and a community committed to making it the best it can be. Oneida Nation Enterprises is a major employer along with the Oneida Healthcare Center and Colgate University. The county is also an Empire Zone. New York State's Empire Zone program was created to stimulate economic growth through a variety of State tax incentives designed to attract new businesses to the State and to enable existing

businesses to expand and create more jobs. The population of 70,197 (2006) is engaged in construction, agricultural services, health care and education.

However, the county faces a challenge that few people understand or even know about. The community faces a silent crisis of low literacy that severely limits its potential for future growth and prosperity and puts the entire future of the region in jeopardy.

The literacy crisis is not unique to Madison County. *A Nation At Risk* (1983) sounded the alarm about the quality of the nation's schools. By 1990, the bipartisan *Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce* noted that the United States, unlike all of its economic competitors, does not have a system of education standards identifying the skills and knowledge all students need to compete in the 21st century economy. Additionally, international statistics show that the United States as a whole is becoming a less educated nation. The National Commission on Adult Literacy reports, "The U.S. is the only one of the thirty Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) free-market countries where young adults are less educated than the previous generation." It goes on: "America's workforce is compromised by a lagging K-12 education system, a significant increase in immigration from non-English speaking countries, and an adult education system that is now obsolete and ill-equipped to meet the 21st century needs" (NCAL, 2008).

Every American community wants to make high-level, high-impact changes to improve education, and Madison County is no exception. However, the county has its own set of circumstances that present unique challenges as well as unique ways in which it may choose to solve its low literacy crisis. The current national economic situation is impacting the county as it is all areas and benefits from the economic stimulus bill are not yet evident.

Interest in literacy in rural areas varies with economic, social and political circumstances. Many policymakers believe low rates of adult literacy to be a special challenge of rural economic development. In the United States, many poor citizens live in rural communities. Low literacy and poverty go hand in hand. One focus group participant noted, "Literacy programming is especially crucial in our rural areas, where home visits can keep mothers and families from feeling isolated." The cost of preventative programming is minimal compared to the financial impact and human toll of low literacy.

The issues associated with limited rural literacy have plagued the United States. Akenson (1984) develops this theme in his comparison of the Southern Literacy Campaign (1910-1935) with efforts to promote literacy in the rural areas. "Industrial efficiency" was a prime concern of the earlier programs. Today, similar results are expected from programs to prepare rural workers for the "information age." Both efforts emphasized the benefits from improved productivity of rural economies.

Specific issues have been identified as important in rural areas:

- Lower population sizes and densities
- Lack of economies of scale
- Lack of transportation services
- Unmet social service and health needs
- Lack of economic and technological infrastructures that support services
- Few opportunities for long-term population and economic development
- Limited funding resources (i.e. national corporate literacy funders absence from rural regions; limited public funding for small populations)

The following map identifies the distribution of literacy services, showing services clustered in the population hubs of the county with few services in the most rural parts of the county.

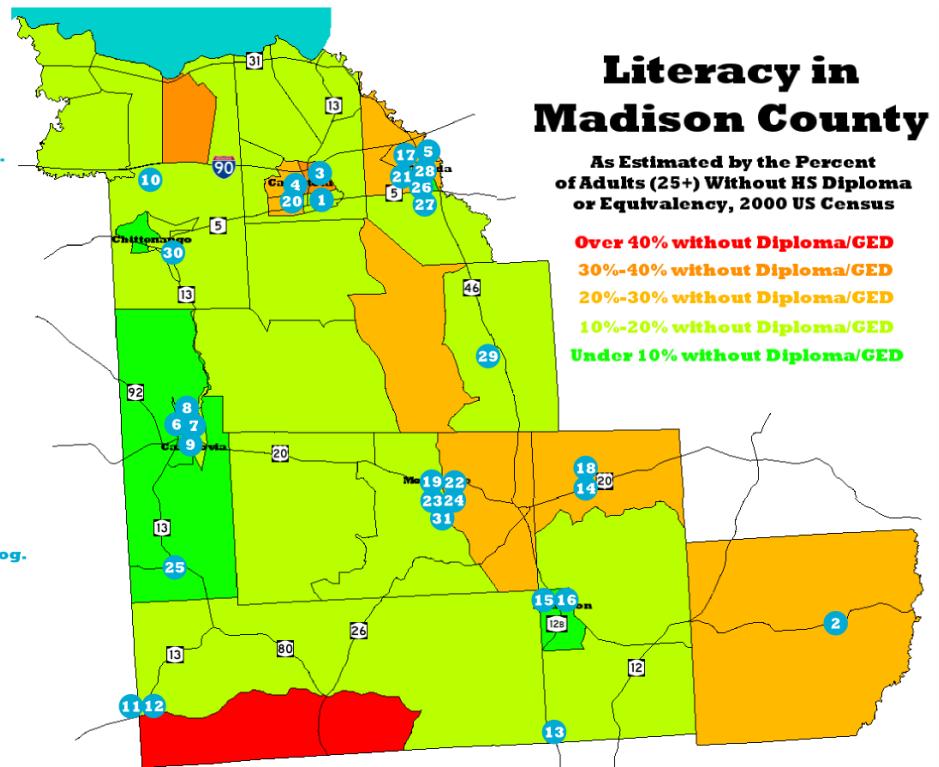


*“An educated and literate population is a value to everyone.
The community as a whole and each individual’s
economic status would rise as a result.
There would be less crime, lower taxes and more economic
prosperity for everyone.”*

Larry Carpenter, Town of Canastota

Literacy Provider Locations Map of Madison County

- 1 BRIDGES
- 2 Brookfield Central SD
- 3 Canastota Central SD
- 4 Canastota Public Library
- 5 Catholic Charities
- 6 Cazenovia Central SD
- 7 Cazenovia Coll. Academic Learning Ctr.
- 8 Cazenovia Coll. Ctr. for Continuing Ed.
- 9 Cazenovia Public Library
- 10 Chittenango Central SD
- 11 DeRuyter Central SD
- 12 DeRuyter Free Library
- 13 Earlville Free Library
- 14 Future Farmers of America
- 15 Hamilton Central SD
- 16 Hamilton Public Library
- 17 Liberty Resources
- 18 Madison Central SD
- 19 Madison Co. Head Start
- 20 Madison Co. Office for the Aging
- 21 Madison-Cortland ARC
- 22 Morrisville Public Library
- 23 Morrisville St. Coll. / Ed. Opportunity Prog.
- 24 Morrisville-Eaton Central SD
- 25 New Woodstock Free Library
- 26 Oneida City SD
- 27 Oneida Family YMCA
- 28 Oneida Public Library
- 29 Stockbridge Valley Central SD
- 30 Sullivan Free Library
- 31 Workforce Development & Community Education



Yet rural communities have resources that can play an important role in addressing these challenges. These include dedicated volunteers and professionals who work every day to meet the needs of students; an attachment to place that in many communities combines with a commitment to meet community needs and a strong work ethic and value placed on self-sufficiency.

WHAT IS LITERACY?

The Workforce Investment Act defines literacy as “an individual’s ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual and in society.” All of these abilities are outlined and measured by the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, which tested a sample of over 19,000 American adults in 2003 and found that literacy levels had changed very little since the previous assessment in 1992 (NAAL, 2003).

People often think of literacy solely in terms of reading and writing, but there are many aspects of literacy that are broader than just the basic skills. These include health literacy, workforce literacy, financial literacy, computer literacy, family literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). A glossary of literacy terminology can be found in the appendices.

The definition of literacy has broadened over time because of the changing nature of society. With the growth of technology and the need for higher skill levels in the workplace, students who might once have succeeded effectively in life with an eighth grade reading level and a minimum package of basic skills must now have a high-school diploma and college coursework demonstrating a more diverse and complex set of abilities.

The definition of literacy has also expanded from just adult literacy to include lifelong learning, including children’s acquisition of the pre-literacy skills needed for success in kindergarten, such as understanding the relationships between symbols and sounds, and early concepts of numeracy. Research shows that children who are unable to gain these pre-reading skills are unlikely to catch up with their peers during the elementary years and are more likely to drop out of school when they are older.

Community literacy involves establishing a process of shared problem-solving that unites communities around the vision of 100 percent literacy through 100 percent community engagement. Community literacy includes all family members and all community stakeholders in order to facilitate literacy infusion, the practice of incorporating literacy in all community initiatives. Incorporating literacy into diverse community efforts helps to promote literacy more effectively and increases the general awareness and understanding of the issue of literacy. The implementation of community literacy is both bottom up and top down. It can change the way literacy is viewed at all levels, from the local level to the national.

METHODOLOGY OF REPORT

This Needs Assessment includes an analysis of the literacy landscape of Madison County. It demonstrates where the needs exist, both sociologically and geographically. Data have been collected from a variety of sources¹ to help illustrate the social, demographic, economic, and educational situation. Key community leaders helped develop the base of knowledge through email and telephone communication. Focus group attendees represented an impressive array of knowledge and expertise. These data have been used to make comparisons and build projections to identify trends. Data are presented in tables, charts, or geographic map formats with additional materials located in appendices.

Current literacy levels for both adults and children in Madison County have been estimated using statistical materials from diverse sources.² The needs assessment also includes a review of scholarly literature that identifies factors associated with low literacy, providing a context for the regional planning process.

The Oneida Public Library set up site visits and key informant interviews for researchers to gain additional information. The guiding questions for the discussions were designed to analyze perceived need, program benefits and barriers to learning and potential gaps in literacy services. Researchers from Literacy Powerline customized the survey instrument to meet the needs of Madison County. A list of participants is included in the appendix.

To determine the needs from the community perspective, the researchers set up a series of focus groups using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA),³ a qualitative research method for gaining insight into how individuals perceive a community issue. Responses were analyzed to identify themes relevant to the issues of low literacy in Madison County.

¹ These include the most recent census information, the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy and a number of more recent national, state, county and city datasets. Additional information has been drawn from the U.S. Department of Education and the Bureau of Labor Statistics,

² Data from the New York State Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor are compared to data from the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, the State Assessment of Adult Literacy and the Survey of Workplace Literacy.

³ IPA is “phenomenological” because it focuses on the uniqueness of the individual’s perceptions and experiences and “interpretive” because researchers must also make sense of the informants’ thoughts and perceptions in the context of the issue and the community. It is a bottom up and inductive approach that avoids prior assumptions and encourages open-ended dialogue. This process can help unforeseen information come to light, bringing new perspectives to the issue. IPA supports data-driven theorizing and results can be compared to the quantitative research to produce a more complete picture of the literacy landscape in the community.

Focus groups were set up across the county in a variety of different locations. In the dialogue participants unanimously agreed that low literacy is a critical issue that must be addressed in Madison County. Their comments are included verbatim in several sections of the report. Respondents included service providers from the full lifelong learning spectrum as well as health literacy, computer literacy, family literacy, workforce literacy and financial literacy services.



*“If only we could use a different word for ‘literacy’
– it is a work that scares people. We need to continue
to spread the word that reading is actually quite fun!”*

Barbara Howland, Town of Cazenovia

FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

A total of 81 community members participated in the process, providing valuable insight, perspectives and data to inform the needs assessment. Participants included representatives from:

Adult literacy	Business
Local and state government	Civic organizations
Healthcare	Arts and culture
Faith community	Funders
Children's literacy	Workforce investment system
Higher education	Community members enrolled in literacy programs
K-12 education	Financial literacy

Once the meetings were completed, the notes were coded and specific themes identified.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Needs related to the impact of low literacy were described as serious challenges to the county. Specific concerns focused on two key areas: early childhood literacy acquisition and the development of improved workforce preparations skills. Participants recognized that the few literacy service providers were working hard to address the problem but did not meet the level of success sufficient to make community change because of lack of resources, outreach, social and family attitudes and the challenges of rural communities. The groups agreed that low literacy is a critical issue that must be resolved and it would result in:

- Improved parenting
- Less stress
- More time for teachers to teach
- Reduced time in disciplining
- Improved economy
- More informed decision making
- Better quality daycare
- Increased employment

Needs related to the rural nature of the county were identified as:

- Challenge of student recruitment
- Lack of contextualized services
- Lack of opportunities for distance learning
- Lack of systematic outreach
- Lack of linkages with vocational training and employment
- Poor transportation and communication

Even though low literacy is a challenge to the health and prosperity of the community, few people are aware of the serious nature of the issue. Lack of coordinated information, communication and collaboration conspire to keep literacy levels low in Madison County. Efforts to make the issue a high community priority have been ineffective.

COSTS TO THE COMMUNITY – RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Several people mentioned that, because of residents' low literacy levels, resources must be allocated to:

- Addressing errors in business that impact the bottom line
- Raising skills levels and providing additional pre-service training
- Increasing staff time to find individuals qualified for jobs
- Enabling people living in poverty to access social services
- Providing basic education for out-of-school youth and adults
- Providing additional healthcare services
- Establishing remedial education in community colleges and universities to prepare students to begin college level courses

National statistics bear out these concerns. For example:

- \$73 billion is spent each year for unnecessary health care expenses that are attributable to poor literacy (NAEL, 2006).
- For each high school graduate there is a savings of \$127,000 in the cost of welfare support over a lifespan. A high school graduate earns \$267,000 more than a non-graduate over a lifespan (Belfield, 2007).



*With 100% literacy we would have 100% employment
and 100% opportunity to pursue our dreams."*

Frank Ridzi, Central New York Community Foundation

LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition to examining the perceptions in the community and the current local data, it is also important to briefly review recent scholarly literature to describe what is already known in the field of literacy to assist those who will be engaged in the planning process.

CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY LITERACY

The work of Padak and Rasinski (2003) reviewed the effectiveness of family literacy programs and showed its benefits to the children, the parents, the families and the communities of those involved, especially in terms of school attendance and achievement. Research indicated that family literacy programs impact children's motivation, social skills, attitudes and even health. Adult learner persistence increased when parents were enrolled in family literacy programs rather than only adult education classes. Families in family literacy programs reported improved relationships and increased parental involvement in their children's educational activities.

The work of Justice and Pullen (2006) demonstrates the value of including storytelling, literacy-in-play activities and the use of teacher-guided phonological awareness. Learning from the best practices of successful programs both in the local area and in the region will help to identify effective program models.

Not all reports describe the same level of success. Research on the Even Start program has been mixed; a study (St. Pierre, 2005) reported disappointing results especially in the areas of program intensity and quality.

National Education Association research reports that when parents are involved in their children's education at home, children do better in school. And when parents are involved in school, children go farther in school — and the schools they go to are better. Positive results of parental involvement include improved student achievement, reduced absenteeism, improved behavior, and restored confidence among parents in their children's schooling.

Three kinds of parental involvement at home are consistently associated with higher student achievement: actively organizing and monitoring a child's time, helping with homework and discussing school matters. The earlier that parent involvement begins in a child's educational process, the more powerful the effects.

Reading achievement is more dependent on learning activities in the home than is math or science. Reading aloud to children is the most important activity that parents can do to increase their child's chance of reading success. Talking to children about books and stories also supports reading achievement. A home environment that encourages learning is more important to student achievement than income, education level or cultural background.

Many parents do not know about roles they could play in supporting their children in school, have had difficult experiences themselves as school children and have limited literacy skills that make reading communications and invitations from school difficult to read.

The No Child Left Behind Act, proposed by President Bush and passed by the Congress in 2001, has continued to push to strengthen schools through a system of state standards, tests and a national accountability system, as well as a targeted effort to help low-performing schools and students. The work has met with mixed results and many challenges but it served to highlight the issues of low literacy among children in the K-12 system.⁴

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The National Institute for After School Programs reports that research shows after school programs of high quality have a critical impact on youth. Some research shows that what children do after school has at least as much bearing on their success as what is accomplished in the school day (NSBA, 2008). There is growing evidence that children who participate in afterschool programs earn better grades, have better work habits, persist at tasks, are more confident and have better attitudes toward school. Durdak and Weisberg conclude that it is vital to invest in quality afterschool programs. While programs range from sports through arts and culture to clubs and formal tutoring and mentoring, few infuse literacy deliberately in these activities.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

Even though schools are working diligently to increase retention rates for both middle and high-school students many do. The National Education Association identified the following strategies, after considerable research, to encourage students to stay in school (NEA, 2007):

⁴ The outcomes of parental involvement have been documented in the following research: Parent involvement leads to improved educational performance (Epstein et al., 2002; Fan & Chen, 2001; NMSA, 2003; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002; Van Voorhis, 2003). Parent involvement fosters better student classroom behavior (Fan & Chen, 2001; NMSA, 2003). Parents who participate in decision making experience greater feelings of ownership and are more committed to supporting the school's mission (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Parent involvement increases support of schools (NMSA, 2003). Parent involvement improves school attendance (Epstein et al., 2002). Parent involvement creates a better understanding of roles and relationships between and among the parent-student-school triad (Epstein et al., 2002). Parent involvement improves student emotional well-being (Epstein, 2005). Types of parent involvement and quality of parent involvement affect results for students, parents, and teachers (Epstein, 1995).

Mandate high-school graduation or equivalency as compulsory for everyone below the age of 21. Just as we established compulsory attendance to the age of 16 or 17 in the beginning of the 20th century, it is appropriate and critical to eradicate the idea of "dropping out" before achieving a diploma. To compete in the 21st century, all of our citizens, at a minimum, need a high school education.

Establish high-school graduation centers for students 19-21 years old to provide specialized instruction and counseling to all students in this older age group who would be more effectively addressed in classes apart from younger students.

Make sure students receive individual attention in safe schools, in smaller learning communities within large schools, in small classes (18 or fewer students), and in programs during the summer, weekends and before- and after-school that provide tutoring and build on what students learn during the school day.

Expand students' graduation options through creative partnerships with community colleges in career and technical fields and with alternative schools so that students have another way to earn a high-school diploma. For students who are incarcerated, tie their release to high-school graduation by the end of their sentences.



"I wish that I can get better at my reading, math and spelling."
Jennie Slover, Madison County resident

Increase career education and workforce readiness programs in schools so that students see the connection between school and careers after graduation. To ensure that students have the skills they need for these careers, integrate 21st century skills into the curriculum and provide all students with access to 21st century technology.

Act early so students do NOT drop out with high-quality, universal preschool and full-day kindergarten; strong elementary programs that ensure students are doing grade-level work when they enter middle-school; and middle-school programs that address causes of dropping out that appear in these grades and ensure that students have access to algebra, science, and other courses that serve as the foundation for success in high school and beyond.

Involve families in students' learning at school and at home in new and creative ways so that *all* families can support their children's academic achievement, help their children engage in healthy behaviors, and stay actively involved in their children's education from preschool through high school graduation.

Monitor students' academic progress in school through a variety of measures during the school year that provide a full picture of students' learning and help teachers make sure students do not fall behind academically.

Monitor, accurately report, and work to reduce dropout rates by gathering accurate racial, ethnic, and economic data, establishing benchmarks in each state for eliminating dropouts, and adopting the standardized reporting method developed by the National Governors Association.

Involve the entire community in dropout prevention through family-friendly policies that provide release time for employees to attend parent-teacher conferences; work schedules for high school students that enable them to attend classes on time and be ready to learn; "adopt a school" programs that encourage volunteerism and community-led projects in school; and community-based, real-world learning experiences for students.

Make sure educators have the training and resources they need to prevent students from dropping out including professional development focused on the needs of diverse students and students who are at risk of dropping out; up-to-date textbooks and materials, computers, and information technology; and safe modern schools.

Make high school graduation a federal priority by calling on Congress and the president to invest \$10 billion over the next 10 years to support dropout prevention programs and states who make high school graduation compulsory.

Students, as young as thirteen and as old as twenty-one years old, who have dropped out of traditional education settings need special assistance. The 2003 NAAL study of literacy among incarcerated people and Laudon Aron's research on out of school youth, Accelerating the

Agenda, demonstrates the need for alternative pathways for youth, including programs that re-engage youth who have not thrived in traditional settings. Aron reports, "Little attention is being paid to the need for scaled efforts to reconnect dropouts to education options that prepare them for success in the economy of the future." These youth need access to high-quality alternative education and training opportunities that will equip them to compete in today's labor market.

In 1971, on average, male dropouts working full-time earned \$35,087. By 2002, this figure had fallen 35 percent, to \$23,903. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "When an occupation has workers with different levels of education, the worker with more education is better able to compete for the job" (Moncarz, 2005). The article goes on to describe how individuals with a high school degree and some college or vocational training are more likely to be hired, to earn more when they start a job and over a lifetime, and to become supervisors.

Aron also notes, "Reconnecting youth requires collaboration and coordination among multiple youth-serving systems: these certainly include school and youth employment and training programs, but also child protective service systems, the juvenile justice system, and a variety of health and human services agencies, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment agencies, crisis intervention centers, runaway and homeless youth shelters, and others." (Aron, 2006).



"I wish that there were more places to get trained and more programs to help place people with jobs that they would like to have."

Lisa Hoose, Madison County resident

ADULT LITERACY AND ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Research in adult literacy demonstrates that traditional approaches in this field have not worked well. National estimates suggest fewer than five percent of those who could benefit from services are actually enrolled in classes. Persistence studies (Porter, 2005) found that the majority of adult learners who do attend programs do not put in the number of hours needed to demonstrate success. (An estimated 150 hours of study is required to achieve a grade level increase.)

When programs put learning in a context that makes sense to the student, results definitely improve. The 2006 study by Beder, Tomkins, Medina, Riccioni and Deng concluded that teacher roles, contextualized instruction and classroom norms all positively influenced the participants' success. Unfortunately improving instruction is difficult because part time adult education instructors do not have ready access to professional development (Center for Adult English Acquisition, 2005).

SENIOR LITERACY

Reading is a skill that helps maintain mental acuity into old age and is especially important to develop in men and women with limited literacy. As life expectancy increases and as seniors become a larger proportion of our population, literacy skill development for seniors will continue to take on greater importance. A study by Roman (2004) of adult learners notes that older learners experience more shame about their limited skills, which many have effectively hidden for much of their lives. A United Healthcare, Secure Horizons study reports, "At the individual level, low literacy was reported to be associated with greater shame and frustration, greater poverty and unemployment, poorer health and health care access, and greater risk of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias associated with cognitive decline."

CORRECTIONAL LITERACY

The United States has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. One in every 100 Americans 16 and older is behind bars (2.6 million in 2006). About 43 percent of these men and women do not have a high-school diploma and 56 percent have very limited literacy skills.

When they re-enter society, formerly incarcerated men and women have an extremely difficult time getting jobs due to their prison records. For those without sufficient education and literacy skills, finding employment is nearly impossible (NCAL, 2008). Research suggests that education in prison is a major way to increase employment rates for men and women reentering society, thus reducing the likelihood that they will return to criminal activities. The 2003 NAAL report indicated that only nineteen percent of men and women in prison had achieved a GED while incarcerated and just five percent were enrolled in programs that might lead to a GED (NAAL, 2003).

WORKFORCE LITERACY

The skills needed to get and keep jobs are referred to as workplace literacy, or Vocational English as a Second Language (VESOL) when taught in the context of language acquisition. “Workers who were skilled with their hands and could reliably work in repetitive and sometimes physically demanding jobs were the engine of the old economy. In today’s New Economy, knowledge-based jobs are driving prosperity … jobs held by individuals with at least two years of college” (Kauffman, 2008). In *Reach Higher, America: Overcoming the Crisis in the U.S. Workforce*, challenges of workforce literacy is summarized bluntly: “America’s workforce is compromised by a lagging K-12 education system, a significant increase in immigration from non-English speaking countries, and an adult education system that is now obsolete and ill-equipped to meet the 21st century needs” (NCAE, 2008).

HEALTH LITERACY

Research by the Institute of Medicine and Healthy People 2010 identifies the range of health issues that are exacerbated for people with limited literacy. Even many people with higher literacy in reading and writing still lack essential health knowledge and skills necessary for a healthier life (Healthy People 2010, 2008). The 2003 NAAL executive summary, *The Health Literacy of America’s Adults*, notes that 14% of adults surveyed had below basic levels. Only 12% were deemed proficient. “Health literacy is of concern to everyone involved in health promotion and protection, disease prevention, and early screening, health care maintenance and policymaking” (NAAL, 2006).

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Research highlighting Americans’ alarming lack of financial skills has led to action in recent years at the highest levels of government. The current mortgage crisis dramatizes many of these issues. In 2002, the U.S. Treasury established an Office of Financial Education because of growing concerns about low financial literacy not only among those with limited literacy skills but among the general population as well. In 2003 Congress created the Financial Literacy and Education Commission, followed in 2006 by the National Strategy on Financial Literacy and the President’s Advisory Council on Financial Literacy. Despite the federal government’s efforts, there is still a widespread lack of financial literacy among the American people.

COMPUTER LITERACY

Computer literacy is the knowledge and ability to use computers and technology efficiently. It also refers to the comfort level someone has with using computer programs and other applications associated with computers. *A Nation Online: Entering the Broadband Age* (2004) reported that more than 65% of households own a computer. With the price of computers decreasing year by year access is rapidly increasing. However, those who do not own or have access to computers are often those with the fewest skills and resources. Keying is a basic skill. Those who might benefit most from this powerful tool to increase their skills are often the very people for whom it is least accessible.



“I wish that I improve my reading and writing skill and get to know better about the place/area I live and also the country.”

Sharon Liang, Madison County resident

ASSESSMENT, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessment, findings and recommendations are presented by topic area:

Early Childhood and Family Literacy
The K-12 Education System and Literacy Acquisition
Out of School Time Programming
Youth and the Transition from School to Work and College
Adult Literacy
English for Speakers of Other Languages Instruction
Numeracy
Literacy and Senior Citizens
Learning Disabilities
Literacy and Faith-Based Communities
Impact of Poverty on Literacy
Literacy, Crime and Safety
Health Literacy
Financial Literacy
Technology and Computer Literacy
Economic Impact of Low Literacy
Population Changes and Challenges



“By raising the literacy level in our community we become a more desirable destination for businesses and future community members.

WE become the community everyone wants to live in.”

Michelle Ryan, Oneida Public Library

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY LITERACY

Literacy is key to children's success. Children who have limited literacy skills experience enormous difficulty in all academic subjects throughout their school careers as well as major challenges in their adult lives. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has concluded that a child's success is closely related to the parent's education level (NCES, 2006). The higher the parent's education level, the more likely the child will perform well in school. Given the negative impact of low literacy on children, NAAL research demonstrates that for each level of literacy improvement there is an increase in children moving out of poverty.

"The home is the foundation for all future success of our children. Therefore, supporting parents as their children's first and most influential teacher is essential," noted one focus group member. Focus group participants identified low literacy as an issue for the community and commented on the number of programs supporting children and families that have closed due to lack of funding, including Even Start and a program for teen mothers. In the Head Start program staff works with parents who do not have the skills to help their children succeed and gain the pre-reading skills necessary for kindergarten. "We used to have a program offering life and parenting skills," noted one participant, "but that is gone, too."

Children are better able to succeed in kindergarten when they have had good pre-school experiences and when children regularly see parents modeling reading (National Center for Family Literacy). One informant noted, "With Even Start gone there is a big void in the community." Focus group participants would like to see more services for children and families that encourage pre-reading activities and help parents support their children. It was noted that "There needs to be ways to encourage parents to bring children to programs. It has to be fun." Only 189 children are enrolled in Head Start across Madison County. 2,830 (79%) of children under 5 are not enrolled in early education programs.

In the 2006 "Transition to Kindergarten Report, Practices in School Districts and Child Care Centers in Madison County" (Apter, 2006), it was estimated that slightly over 50% of children were enrolled in child care programs. These were identified as settings where early literacy and school preparation could begin especially to assist in a smooth transition from one learning location to another. School districts reported that they send learning activities, including booklists and literacy activities, home to children prior to kindergarten entry, but none of the childcare centers in the survey had any knowledge of this. The report recommended that "Early childhood settings and schools work together to develop common language, expectations and definitions for readiness and transition." The following activities were suggested:

- School district administrators and teachers should increase their understanding of the varying types of preschool experiences that children bring to school and contemplate how school districts could contribute to the quality of those experiences.
- Early childhood personnel should increase their awareness and understanding of the New York State standards school are challenged to meet.
- Both systems should work to agree upon readiness expectations as well as the strategies to achieve smooth transitions.
- Both systems should collaborate to nurture productive partnerships between families and schools.



*“We need to start now with our youngest members of our community.
Literacy is the beginning to a bright future.”*

Maureen Dunn, Madison County Health Department

The Mid-York Child Care Coordinating Council has identified transition to kindergarten as a major concern that faces many child care providers, a concern that providers would like to see addressed. This is an action area for the Council in 2009 (Mid-York CCCC, 2009).

The NYS Department of Family Assistance, Office of Children and Family Services identifies the number of children being served in early childhood programs as follows:

Facility	Total Capacity in County	Total Capacity in Oneida City School District
Infant	70	32
Toddler	106	44
Preschool	392	126
2 yrs to 12 yrs	366	54
School Age	694	277
Total	1,628	533

(Source: MidYork Child Coordinating Council, report date 1/20/2009)

The agencies serving young children are:

YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley (school age capacity – 240)

Madison County Head Start (preschool capacity – 52)

Oneida Area Day Care Center (Infant-24; Toddler-36; Preschool-56; School Age-13)

Patty Cakes (Infant-8; Toddler-8; Preschool-18; School Age-10)

Note: remaining capacity provided by family day care providers.

Programs like the Agri-Business Child Development Program (ABCD) reach out to the families of farm workers, but on the whole most services are provided in the small towns and not in the more rural parts of the county. The Madison County Head Start program has a waiting list of 130 children. “There are just not sufficient places for children.”

Encouraging parent participation is sometimes a challenge. “On the whole parents are more likely to enroll in a family program for their kids but once they are there they may take advantage of opportunities for themselves.” Participants suggested that incentives for parents

such as a meal or a book might encourage more program attendance. Some programs send activities home to engage children and parents together.

“In the past we provided courses in high school to help students learn parenting. Now there are few places for young parents to turn for help.” The nature of the county populated with small towns and villages makes communication and outreach challenging, and participants identified lack of transportation as the major barrier faced by parents wanting to enroll their children in early childhood programs. As one participant said, “It’s very much like going to the gym - once you get there it’s great fun, if only we can find the ways to get them there!”

Overview of early literacy services:

- There are not sufficient pre-kindergartens within the school districts. Chittenango, Cazenovia and DeRuyter school districts have no pre-K.
- BOCES serves 180 3-5 year olds and used to support home visits to assist parents, but that component of the program has been cut.
- The role of libraries is important although early childhood programming is not tracked to determine the number of hours a child may attend programs throughout a semester or year.
- Standing Tall is a good example of a family literacy program. It is modeled on the Even Start framework and includes site visits and serves eleven families.
- A bookmobile travels year round through the Hamilton area. Staff gives gift packets to every newborn and visit regularly till school age.
- The Oneida Nation Early Learning Center is nationally accredited but is at capacity and lacks space to serve all the children.
- Child care providers vary in the amounts of pre-reading activities and the hours of literacy training in kindergarten readiness.

Participants in focus groups did note that when child care providers offer additional outreach and events they do not often get a large turn-out. One commented, “Working on building relationships is tough because it is time consuming.” However, Head Start does reach out through health fairs, WIC clinics and farmers markets, and advertises on the radio to increase knowledge about its programs.

The concept of wrap-around services was also raised in focus groups: Literacy programs need to offer social services as well as medical and dental help for families. “We need to develop

comprehensive family literacy and support services,” said one focus group participant, “That will be another way to increase participation.”

FINDINGS

1. Need for more early childhood programs to reach young children
2. Many areas have limited public transportation or none at all
3. Strategies to transition from early childcare programs to kindergarten are needed

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Build the capacity of the current service providers to serve more students more effectively.
2. Identify and eliminate potential barriers of transportation (e.g. support an increase in the volunteer base, trip-specific transportation for education, funding support for innovative programs such as Community Action Partnership’s model).
3. Convene school district administrators, teachers, and early childhood personnel to develop strategies for transition from early childcare programs to kindergarten.
4. Identify and secure public and private funding to support strategies.



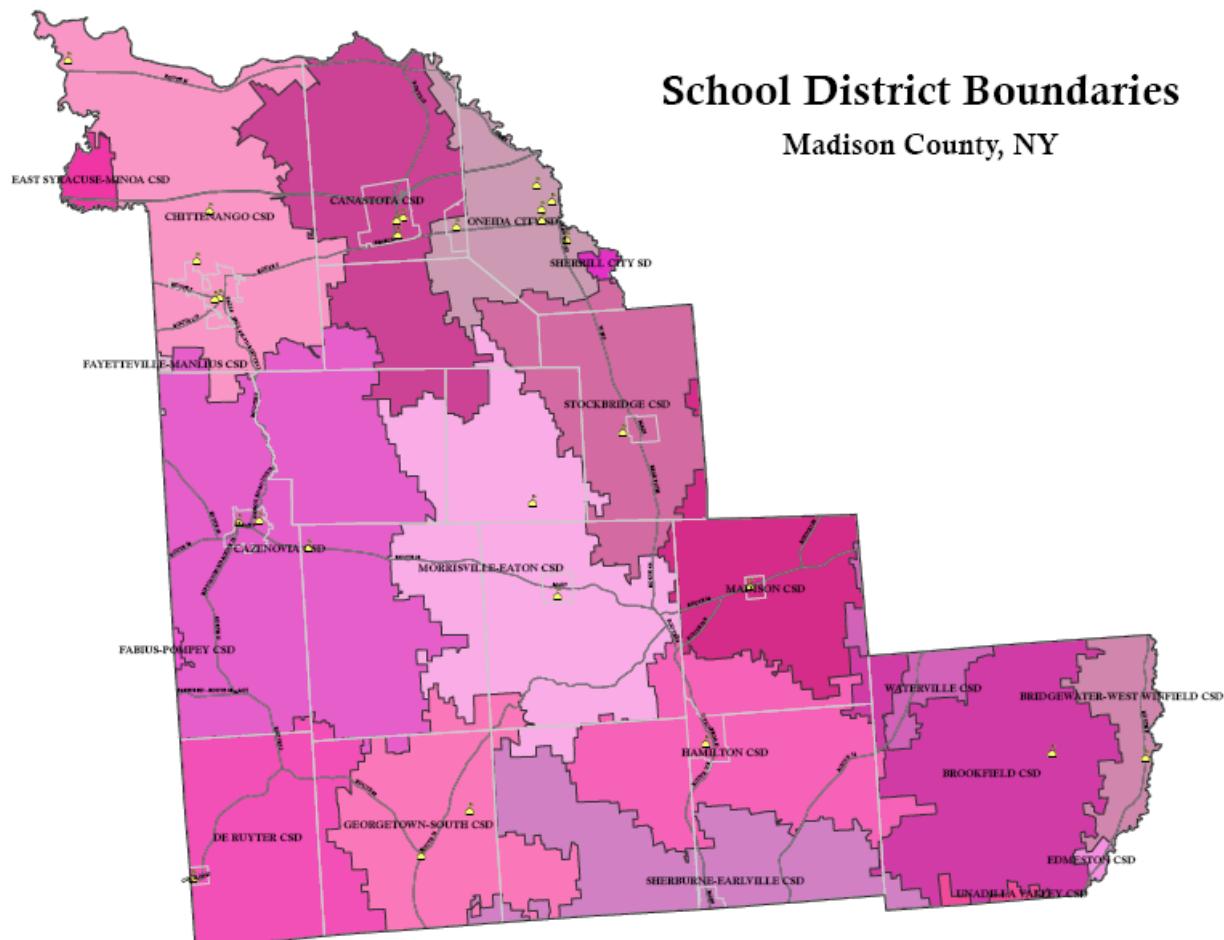
*“Literacy is the foundation of learning, growth,
social and behavioral aspects in life.”*

Tammy Ablang, Mid-York Child Care Coordinating Council

THE K-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM AND LITERACY ACQUISITION

Madison County has some excellent school districts with schools doing outstanding and exemplary work. The school districts are:

- Brookfield Central School District
- Canastota Central School District
- Cazenovia Central School District
- Chittenango Central School District
- DeRuyter Central School District
- Hamilton Central School District
- Madison Central School District
- Morrisville-Eaton Central School District
- Oneida City School District
- Stockbridge Valley Central School District



Private vs. public school enrollment:

Students in private schools in grades 1 to 8 (elementary and middle school): 375

Madison County:  4.6%

New York State:  14.0%

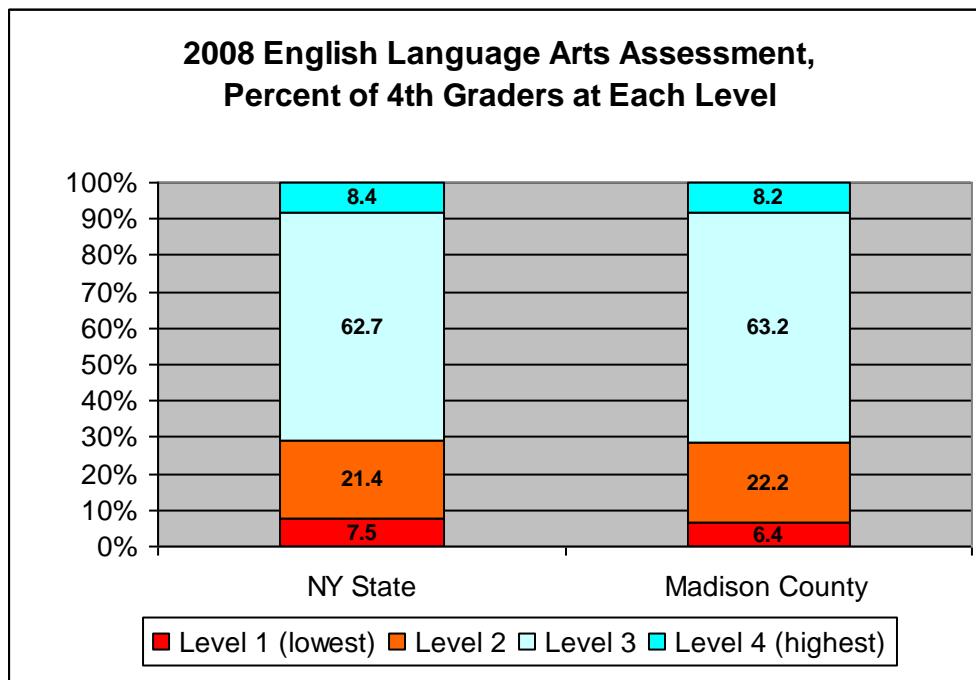
Students in private schools in grades 9 to 12 (high school): 137

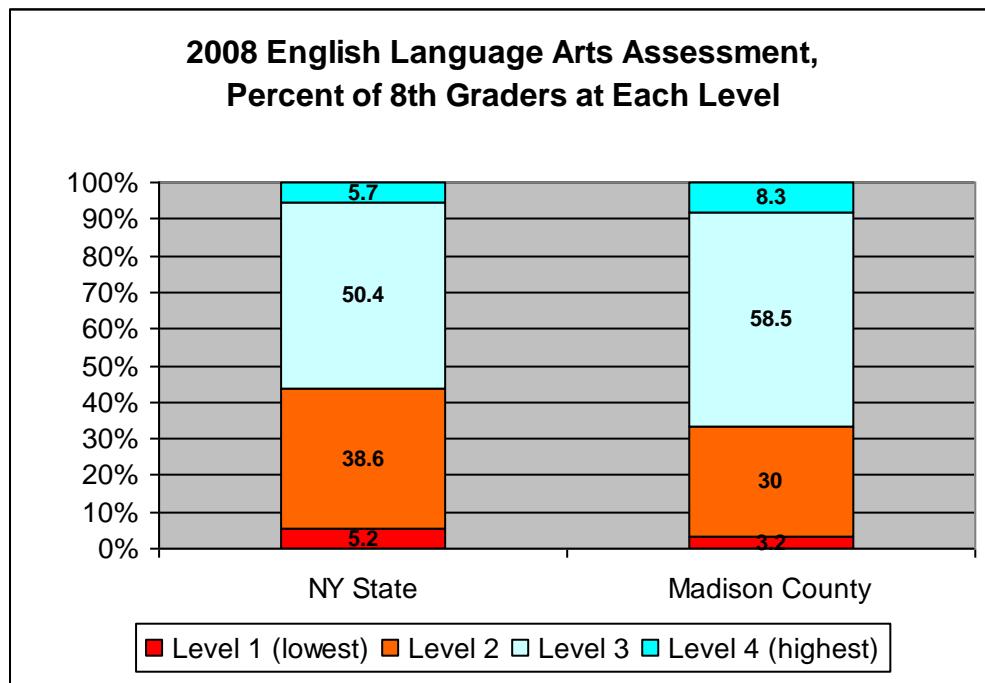
Madison County:  3.2%

New York State:  13.2%

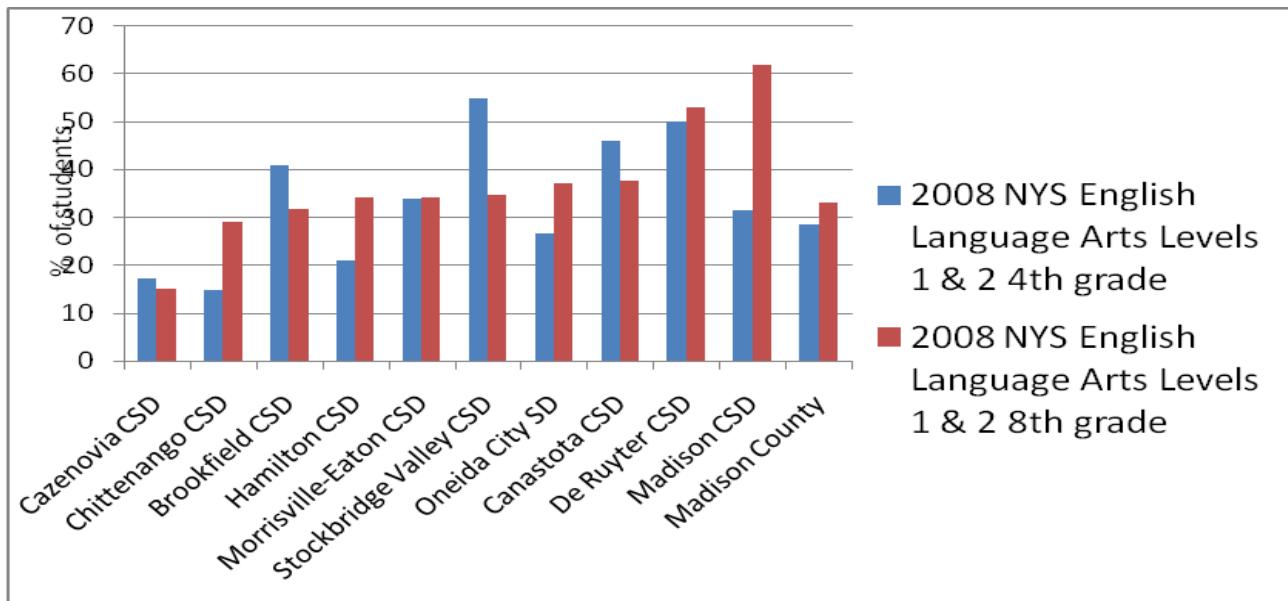
Helping children gain effective literacy skills while they are in elementary school will go a long way to solving the literacy crisis. Focus group participants noted many schools are challenged by children arriving in kindergarten not ready to learn to read, by inequities in the school funding system and by lack of strong parent/school relationships. One participant noted that 90% of the children she works with in special education classes are reading disabled. But in mainstream classes a participant commented that children come to school unprepared to learn, especially when parents have limited literacy skills.

By fourth grade students in Madison County have roughly the same ELA test scores as the NYS average. However, 28.6% of fourth graders are in the lowest two levels. The following data is from the 2008 statewide English Language Arts Assessment.





Eighth graders in Madison County do better than the state average, but still one third are performing at less than proficient levels.



An analysis of the changes identified in the above graph would help in creating effective strategies to support students/schools with the most critical needs.

An elementary school principal noted that literacy is the core of all learning and that the whole community should be included. One participant noted, “Some children come with a love of learning, but families with low literacy don't have the skills to pass on to children to prepare them. Everyone wants their children to do well.” Participants in the focus groups also commented that there was a concern about insufficient summer school programs since children frequently experience regression in skills over the summer months.

The most critical issue identified by participants was how to ensure that children learn the literacy skills needed within the school year, and how to ensure that teaching strategies and tutoring support are available where needed. The Literacy Audit conducted by the Morrisville-Eaton Central School District (2008) supported these comments. In the pedagogical assessment section of the report the following recommendations were made:

- Provide timely and ample feedback, both verbal and written, to all students.
- Use teaching approaches that foster critical thinking, questioning, student decision making and independent learning.
- Be sure that there is consistent and pervasive use of rubrics for the purpose of evaluation and self-evaluation and even assignment development.
- Increase the use and display of essential questions in elementary school for planning, instruction, and assessment.
- Develop skills in critical thinking and reading strategy instruction during elementary reading lessons.
- Model ‘think alouds’ in the elementary classrooms.
- When appropriate, reinforce creative writing to supplement effective communicator writing at the elementary level and on-demand writing at the middle and high school.
- Teachers need to become more familiar with brain-based learning research via recommended reading and/or workshops for teachers based on Robert Marzano, Spence Rogers, and Eric Jenson, etc.
- Increase brain-based learning practices at all levels.
- Develop knowledge about delivering direct and explicit instruction in literacy.

The Literacy Audit recognized that improvement within the system needed to be matched by community support. In the focus group one elementary school principal commented, “This is a county where people don't leave and literacy is a huge problem. Schools need more help.

Especially in the summers because there is no summer school - no funding. We were a Reading First school but that ended this year."

There is a great deal of concern to make improvement. "K-12 NYS standards are expected to be raised in 2009. How will we accomplish this? As teachers, we know students can't read at the expected level but we don't know how to fix it."

Participants considered the possibility of using the vision of the statewide Board of Regents P-16 Council as a model for Madison County. The Board envisions a New York State in which all people are prepared for citizenship, work and continued learning throughout their lives. They foresee a New York in which gaps in achievement have closed, and the overall level of knowledge and skill among residents matches or exceeds the best in the world. In spite of progress over the last decade, we are far from achieving that vision. The Board of Regents P-16 goals are as follows:

1. Every child will get a good start;
2. Every child will read by the second grade;
3. Everyone will complete middle level education ready for high school;
4. Everyone will graduate from high school ready for work, higher education, and citizenship;
5. People who begin higher education will complete their programs;
6. People of all ages who seek more knowledge and skill will have the fullest opportunity to continue their education.

The Regents will engage with statewide and local partners on the actions below, adopt or recommend policy as appropriate, and, with the State Education Department and all of SUNY, seek the following improved results system-wide.

STUDENTS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote a sustainable early education program for all students. Resolve issues of standards, funding and service delivery for young children. 2. Improve academic outcomes for children with disabilities by setting performance targets, promoting effective practices, and holding schools accountable for dramatic improvements. 3. Improve outcomes for English Language Learners by setting performance targets, promoting effective practices, and holding schools accountable for dramatic improvements. 4. Improve high school attendance and graduation rates by setting performance targets, promoting practices that remove barriers to graduation, and holding schools accountable for dramatic improvements. 5. Report student persistence and college completion results, and increase investment in programs that have been shown to remove barriers to graduation.
SYSTEMS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Raise the learning standards to exceed global standards to graduate all students ready for citizenship, work, and continued education. Align standards, assessments, curriculum and instruction across P-16, emphasizing transitions. 7. Strengthen instruction. Define, reduce and then eliminate the inequitable distribution of teaching talent. Require all teachers of core academic subjects to be highly qualified in the subject they are teaching by July 2007. Improve teacher retention. Focus professional development on effective practices in areas in which academic needs are greatest. Accelerate the integration of technology into teaching and learning practices in P-16 institutions. 8. Advocate for a Foundation Formula to provide State Aid that is adequate, sustainable, fair, and commensurate with the cost of education that enables students to meet the standards. 9. Strengthen the capacity of the State Education Department to support schools as they work to improve student achievement and the Department's capacity to hold them accountable for doing so. 10. Create a P-16 student data system to drive improvements in graduation rates in high school and higher education.
STRUCTURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Reduce barriers to teaching and learning in high need schools by creating a vision and leadership framework for an integrated education, health and mental health collaboration. Promote strategies found to be promising in resolving high incident health and mental health problems among children. 12. Create P-16 Councils to advise the Regents on actions to strengthen USNY and improve student outcomes dramatically at each transition point in the P-16 system. 13. Focus regional education networks on joint P-16 strategies and actions to improve student outcomes.

Focus group participants were concerned about funding cuts and shortfalls given the needs in the county. “People want to have an unconditional commitment to literacy, but it is hard because of the limitations of funding. Where there are insufficient resources, the vision and the practicalities are not matched.” One participant noted that some districts have “spent a lot of dollars on software that are effective, including Reading Recovery, Fast Forward, Read 180,” but services are not sufficient to meet the need and cuts are coming to schools, libraries, after school programs and clubs. Lots of workshops that include training for literacy education are being cut. Funding is a huge piece of staff development and awareness.”

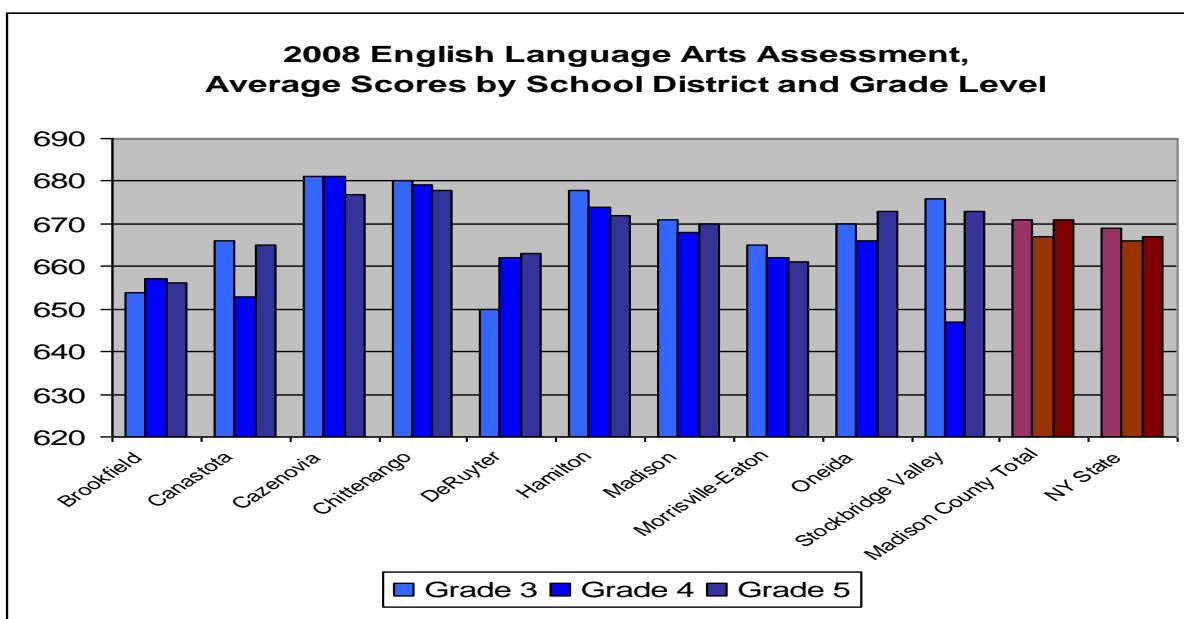
Accountability was another important issue raised was in focus groups. Participants agreed they need better tracking /accountability, especially for transient students. Teachers need to know about what interventions have been successful with individual students. “A real profile of each child is needed.”



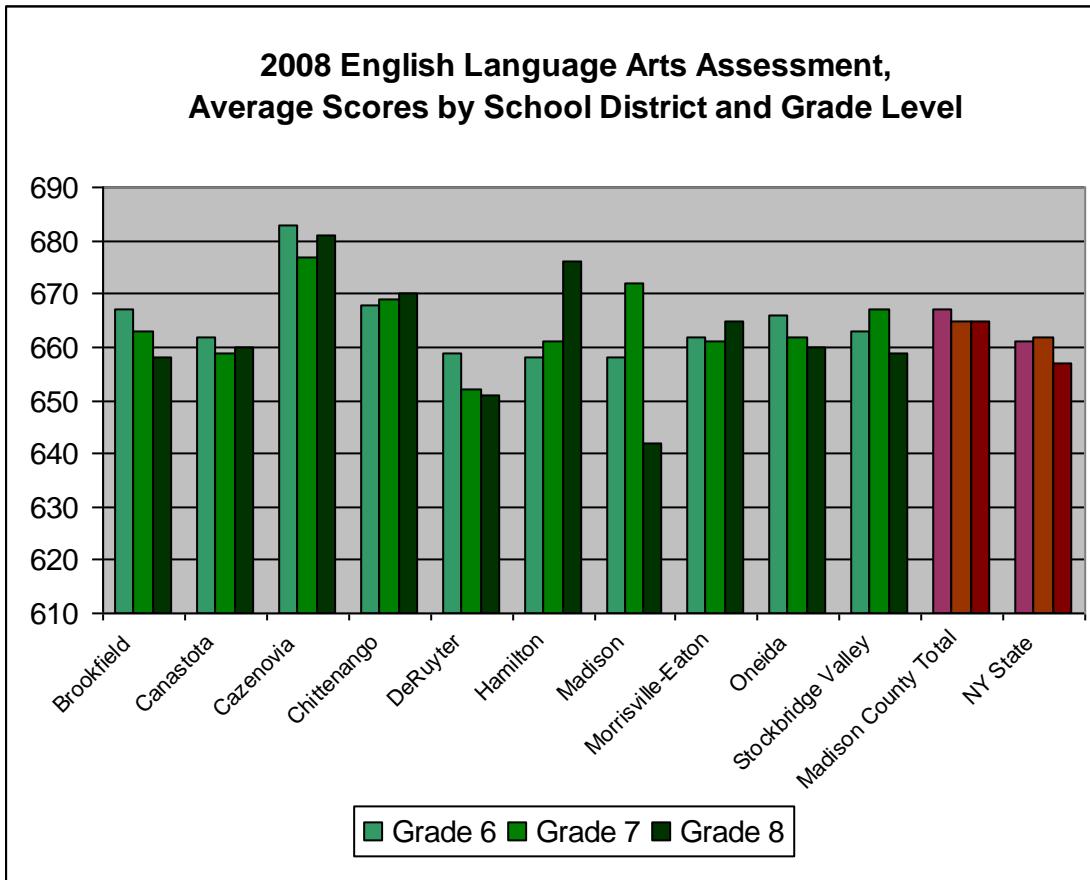
“Literacy directly impacts an individual’s quality of life. Providing opportunity for improvements sends a clear message from the community that we care.”
Maureen Nolan, Oneida City School District

Participants in the educational focus group agreed that if literacy levels were increased:

- Parents would have increased ability to communicate about their children
- Graduation would indicate mastery of subject areas
- Students' self-esteem would improve, changing the climate of schools
- Districts could focus attention on other subjects
- Children would read more
- Discipline would improve
- Society would experience a ripple effect -- better jobs, quality of life
- The community would benefit from its residents' higher levels of thinking
- Technology would be used effectively



ELA test scores for elementary students in Madison County differ by school district. Small school districts, like Brookfield, Canastota, DeRuyter and Morrisville-Eaton, fall below the county and state average and may need additional assistance.



The Morrisville-Eaton Central School District's Literacy Audit identified issues related to literacy support in middle and high school:

It is significant to the Self-Guided Study Team that it was much easier to get information to define findings from the elementary building than from the middle/high school. There were less concrete examples of the audit items regarding general literacy at the middle/high school level. The impression was that not all teachers view themselves as literacy instructors. Analysis of reading instruction in the elementary school suggests that an emphasis on processes of how to read crowds out time and attention to reading for ideas, information and concepts; the very skills needed for success in the upper grades. Meanwhile, the middle/high school classes show a minimum of evidence that literacy instruction continues outside the English classes. Each academic content area poses its

own literacy challenges” in terms of vocabulary, concepts and topics. Accordingly, students in all classes need explicit instruction in the literacy of each discipline, as well as the content of the course, so they can become successful readers and writers in all subjects. By 4th grade many students have learned basic processes of reading and writing; however they need help from teachers to develop the confidence and skills necessary to shift to content area learning in the upper grades.

The Literacy Audit suggests that all teachers be trained as literacy teachers, a concept to be explored by other school districts.

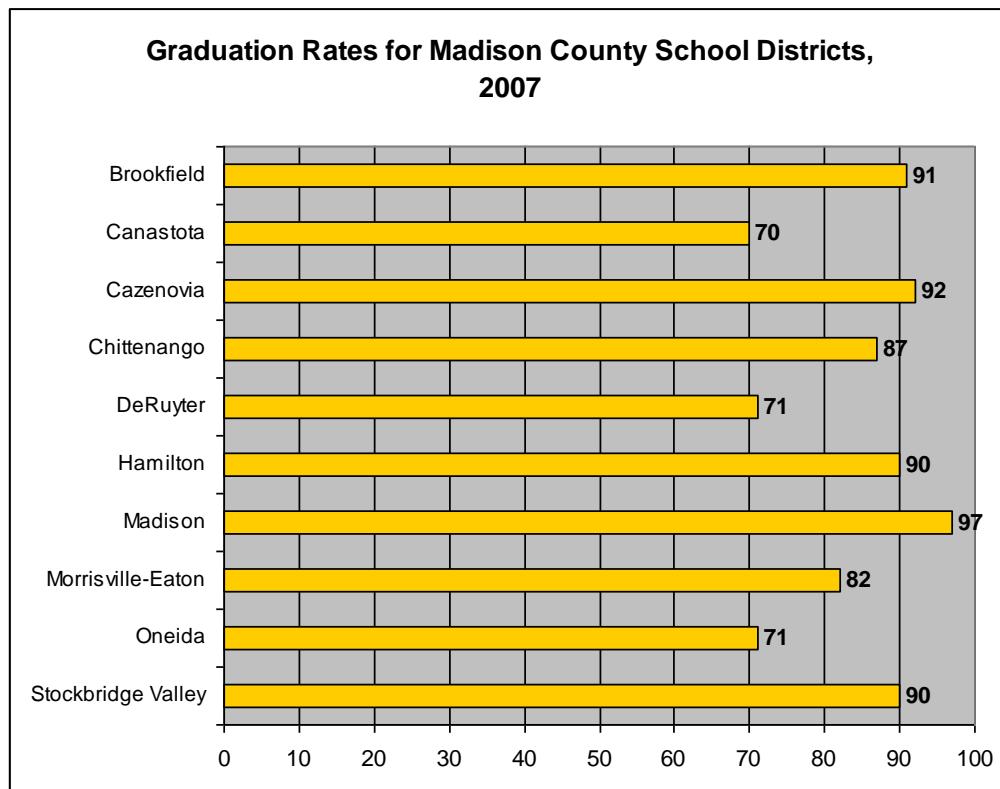
To create 100% literacy in Madison County, communities and schools must work together over the full spectrum of lifelong learning. Currently, colleges, businesses and community organizations assist school districts with volunteers, mentors, services and donations, although there is little data to determine the impact of such support. One example is Colgate University Alumni Association that raises \$80,000 - \$150,000 a year to support programs for the Hamilton schools. The Association works closely with Community Action Partnership which identifies families in need, especially in outlying areas. Rotary clubs are also active in school partnerships.



“I would like to see DeRuyter Central School District initiate one endeavor which would reach out to families and provide opportunities to access books to share between parents and children. Let’s ‘start small and think big’ with regard to promoting literacy.”

Teresa Hudson, DeRuyter Central School District

Graduation rates are unacceptably low in several school districts. Oneida, the largest school district, has almost the lowest graduation rate.



Graduation rates are notoriously difficult to calculate, and state figures tend to be higher than estimates by outsiders. In all local districts, key informants noted low literacy among youth compounds the dropout situation, increases the risk of crime and creates barriers to successful employment.

A focus group participant noted, “Kids are graduating without adequate skills. Parents are not engaged. Kids are not passing Regents because they do not have reading comprehension. Grades 7-12 need to work on reading skills which is new for teachers. We need more teachers. We have more transient students. We need after school help and need programs. We started a mentoring program both with adults and peer to peer support just this year, and we are working on making school more comfortable for parents.” Another participant notes, “Teens are harder to engage with parents. Teens they work alone. Teens have more pressure from peers.”

There are several support programs working in partnership with school districts to assist students. The Partners in Prevention Program works with elementary school children in Cazenovia, Chittenango, and Hamilton and with middle- and high-school students in Oneida

schools. The program aims to assist students who are experiencing academic, attendance or behavioral problems.

Almost every interview and focus group mentioned the crucial need for family involvement in children's learning. The NAEP 2000 national reading assessment of fourth-grade students found the following:

- Higher than average scores among students who reported more types of reading material at home.⁵
- Students who discussed their studies at home, however frequently, had higher average reading scores than students who reported never discussing their studies at home.⁶
- Students who talked about reading with family and friends, however frequently, had higher average scores than students who never or hardly ever talked about reading (Donahue, 2001).

The 2003 NAAL examined how parents/caregivers with different literacy levels interacted with their children. The percentage of parents with children ages 2-17 whose children often saw them reading increased with each literacy level. The percentage of parents who helped children with their homework also increased with each literacy level. In addition, even though almost all parents reported that their children had at least one or two books of their own, the percentage was even higher among parents with intermediate or proficient prose literacy.

A focus group participant noted, "Parents are the key - when books are not in the home, when parents have not had good experiences in school, you are at a disadvantage. We need to instill love of reading. I feel a strong need to reinstate bookmobiles across the county because this is a rural county with big transportation issues. Parents need to partners with the kids in schools today."

⁵ 68% of students who had three or more different types of reading materials at home performed at the Proficient level, while students who had two or fewer types of reading material at home tended to perform at the lower Basic level. Students who had four types of reading material at home performed the highest of all (Donahue, 2001).

⁶ 83% of students who discussed their studies once a month or more at home performed at the Proficient level, compared to students who never or hardly ever discussed their studies at home and tended to perform at the Basic level (Donahue, 2001).

FINDINGS

1. By fourth grade 28% of students in the County are behind in reading.
2. By eighth grade, over 33% of students in 7 out of 10 school districts are not meeting, or only partially meeting, NYS standards in English Language Arts.
3. Graduation rates are unacceptably low in several school districts.
4. Colleges, businesses and community organizations assist school districts but there is little data to determine the impact of such support.
5. Community based programs are only reaching a small number of children through reading support programs.
6. Increased training for teachers and tutors is needed.
7. Literacy improvement requires community partnership with the school system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Literacy audits offer a valuable tool for teachers and provide creative thinking around potential strategies. The use of this tool should expand to all school districts.
2. Strategies are needed to address students/schools with the most critical needs.
3. As suggested in the Literacy audit, train all teachers as literacy teachers.
4. Public and private funding to support strategies need to be identified and secured.



“Our literacy problem will be impacted by our combined efforts to raise awareness of the problem and immediately begin a proactive and measurable process to help correct it.”

Chris Harper, Madison Central School District

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMMING

Young people spend only 20% of their time in school. How they spend the remaining 80% of their time impacts their learning. Unfortunately many children do not have access to enriching opportunities during this out of school time. Unsupervised “latchkey” children who spend their after-school time alone or on the streets can face numerous dangers.

Out of School Time (OST) programs provide additional supports for school success and bridge the gap between school and home for many children. Programs such as the YMCA, Community Action Partnerships and the DeRuyter Public Library programs offer activities to children after school where literacy is a component of the program. There was a strong agreement in the focus group sessions that “Libraries are an essential source of support for children’s literacy success.”

Research demonstrates that students in OST programs have:

- Greater engagement in learning – improved behavior in school, increased sense of self, better work habits and improved attitudes to school;
- Higher academic performance – improved homework completion, improved grades, higher scores on achievement tests and reduction of grade retention.

These results also translate into benefits for working parents, who gain peace of mind by knowing children are in a secure and supervised location and involved in well-structured programs (Nellie Mae, 2003).

OST programs are not a cure-all. The Critical Hours Report (2003) researched numerous programs across the country and determined that “a few hours a day in an afterschool program is not likely to compensate for a poor quality education or years of alienation from school culture and expectation” (Nellie Mae, 2003). However, the same study did report:

- Youth benefit from consistent participation in well-run, high quality afterschool programs
- After-school programs can increase engagement in learning
- After-school programs can increase educational equity
- After-school programs can build key skills necessary for success in today’s economy

One 4-H study of over a quarter million youth in grades 5 – 12 noted, that children in 4-H youth development programs had (4-H, 2008);

- Higher educational aspirations

- Higher achievement motivation
- Greater desire to help others
- Higher self esteem
- Better decision-making skills
- Higher level of interaction and communication with adults
- Better ability to make friends

In Madison County, key informants reported that in rural areas OST programs may not be well attended because of transportation issues.

Through partnerships with a variety of community organizations, schools districts offer a range of before and after school programs. Several of these programs include homework support and tutoring but many do not.

Leaders in the OST programs are the Future Farmers of America chapters in Madison Central School and Stockbridge Valley. FFA provides opportunities on the local, state and national levels for students to improve their leadership abilities and test their agricultural skills. Science and math-intensive classroom lessons are supported by real-life experiences which encourage self-reliance, collaborations, exploration and confidence. There are many opportunities to infuse literacy into these FFA activities. Focus group participants discussed possible ways to include additional literacy activities in other scheduled after-school or summer school activities.

FINDINGS

1. OST programs are not all aligned with specific school goals and student outcomes in all case
2. Literacy has not been consciously infused into more general after-school programs that focus on arts, sports or child care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Align OST programs with specific school goals or student needs.
2. Infuse literacy activities into all after school programs.



“I wish all children would develop literacy skills to read for learning and enjoyment and to articulate what they thought and to be life-long lovers of reading.”

Jan White, Canastota Central School District

YOUTH AND THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK AND COLLEGE

Community transformation requires that schools effectively prepare youth with the skills to succeed in college and/or the workplace. For youth facing uphill academic struggles, the need for transitional support between school and college and/or work is especially great. In 1990, the National Center on Education and the Economy reported that America lagged behind other countries in developing national standards by which to measure student progress (NCEE, 2004).

Focus group participants expressed grave concerns about the level of services for youth who are at risk of dropping out and those already out of school. One participant said, “This generation of kids is doing the least to get by, barely meeting the minimum requirements in high school and then having trouble at college or work.”

A number of programs work to support academic and vocational success for youth who are challenged by other issues. For instance, the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention/Case Management Program and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program support youth toward independence and self-sufficiency. The Bridges program at Morrisville College assists older youth improve their literacy skills and provides them with short-term certificate programs and career exploration. BOCES’ Project Connect and the Oneida Nation’s Work/Learn program both offer support with workforce goals to youth in transition.

Some of the youth who drop out of school annually find their way to alternative education programs. These youth are not immediately eligible to enter college, yet if they enter the workforce, they qualify only for low wage positions with few long range opportunities.

Employers commented that many youth who leave high school or graduate with low literacy skills also have low numeracy skills, poor communication skills and underdeveloped interpersonal and life skills. These employees do undermine the economic success of local businesses.

WHICH STUDENTS ARE MOST AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT?⁷

Age. Students who drop out tend to be older compared to their grade-level peers.

Gender. Students who drop out are more likely to be male. Females who drop out often do so due to reasons associated with pregnancy.

Socioeconomic background. Dropouts are more likely to come from low-income families.

Ethnicity. The rate of dropout is higher on average for Black, Latino, and Native American youth.

Native language. Students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds are more likely to have higher rates of dropout.

Mobility. High levels of household mobility contribute to increased likelihood of dropping out.

Ability. Lower scores on measures of cognitive ability are associated with higher rates of dropping out.

Disability. Students with disabilities (especially those with emotional/behavioral disabilities) are at greater risk of dropping out.

Parental employment. Dropouts are more likely to come from families in which the parents are unemployed.

School size and type. School factors that have been linked to dropout include school type and large school size.

Family structure. Students who come from single-parent families are at greater risk of dropout.

Studies identify the following reasons why students dropping out:

Grades. Students with poor grades are at greater risk of dropping out.

Disruptive behavior. Students who drop out are more likely to have exhibited behavioral and disciplinary problems in school.

Absenteeism. A low rate of attendance is a strong predictor of dropout.

School policies. Alterable school policies associated with dropout include raising academic standards without providing supports, tracking, and frequent use of suspension.

School climate. Positive school climate is associated with lower rates of dropout.

⁷ *Overview of Status Variables Associated with Dropping Out* (Macmillan, 1991; Rosenthal, 1998; Rumberger, 1995; Wolman, Bruininks, & Thurlow, 1989)

Parenting. Homes characterized by permissive parenting styles have been linked with higher rates of dropout.

Sense of belonging. Alienation and decreased levels of participation in school have been associated with increased likelihood of dropout.

Attitudes toward school. The beliefs and attitudes (e.g., locus of control, motivation to achieve) that students hold toward school are important predictors of dropout.

Educational support in the home. Students whose families provide higher levels of educational support for learning are less likely to drop out.

Retention. Students who drop out are more likely to have been held back a grade or more than students who graduate. Using National Education Longitudinal Study data, being held back was identified as the single biggest predictor of dropping out.



*“I would love to see that everyone would have the ability
and opportunity to continue on to higher learning.”*

Pam Heintz, Madison County Department of Social Services

Students who are succeeding tend to stay in school. Therefore, interventions aimed at increasing performance may be the best strategy for the academically struggling students. The following reasons why students stay in school was synthesized from a variety of studies (Christenson, Sinclair, Lehr, & Hurley, 2000). They include:

- Supportive, nurturing family and home environment
- Interaction with and the involvement of committed, concerned educators and other adults
- Development of perseverance and optimism
- Improved attitude toward school and increased motivation to obtain a diploma
- Positive, respectful relationships between staff and students
- Satisfaction with the learning experience (e.g., social climate, instructional climate, school course offerings, and school rules)
- Relevance of curriculum
- Fair discipline policies

Another challenge for the Madison County literacy coalition will be to help create environments that are most aligned to success. High-school graduates need to be supported in their next steps. According to the National Commission on Literacy, as many as 70% of students entering community colleges need to enroll in remedial classes before they can embark on work toward a degree.

Cazenovia College's Academic Learning Center collaborates with faculty and student life staff to provide extensive academic support services, including individual and group tutorials, study skill assistance, workshops, remedial courses, summer academic preparation and academic counseling. The Center is supported by state and federal grants as well as by institutional funds, so that all its services are free to full-time Cazenovia College students.

Other colleges in the area that provide educational and vocational courses include Colgate University and SUNY Morrisville.

Students in private undergraduate colleges: 3,072

Madison County:  54.2%

New York  38.2%

(www.city-data.com)

FINDING

Students who drop out do not know about career and education options and do not enroll in alternative education programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Formalize and streamline the path from school to college and work for ease of access and navigation by learners. More collaboration is needed between parents, schools, alternative programs, the Workforce Investment Board, colleges, employers, and youth.
2. Identify and secure public and private funding to support transitional strategies.



“If we think we can increase literacy – we can.

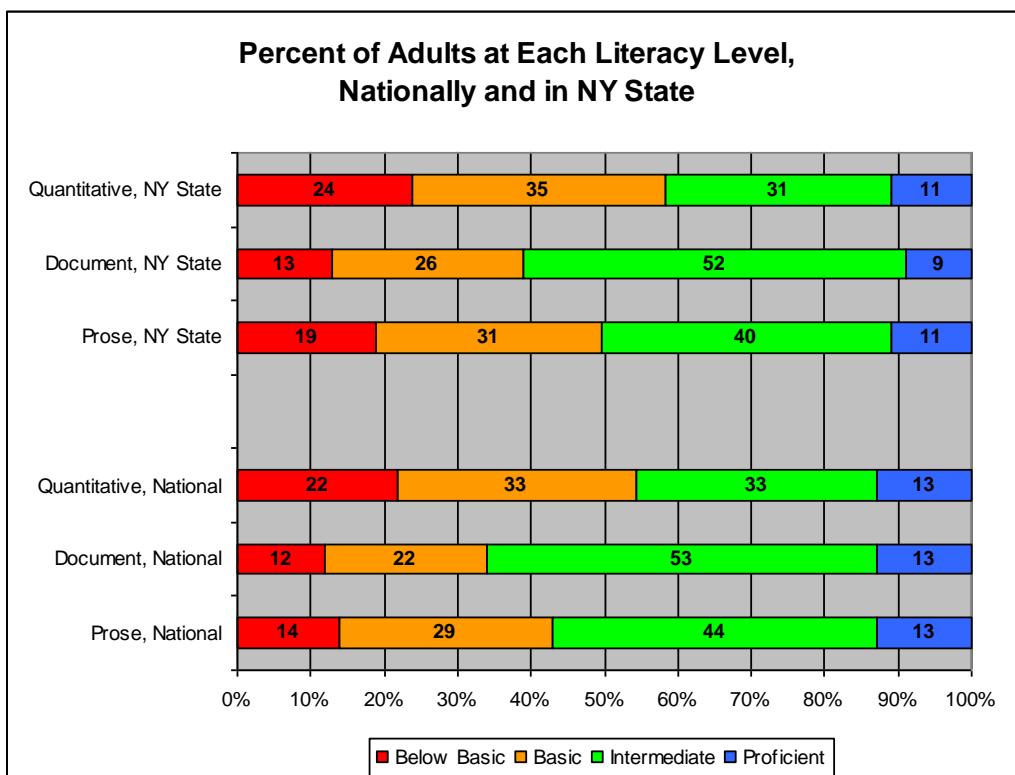
If we think we can’t – we can’t.

Either way we will be right!”

Susan Carr, Madison Oneida BOCES

ADULT LITERACY

Focus group participants identified adult low literacy as a critical issue. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) report for New York State identified literacy by levels in three categories - quantitative, qualitative and prose. In Madison County the same report estimates that 5,520 adults have skills in the *below basic* category. Only 250 adults, or 4.5 % of those who might benefit from services, are enrolled in programs.



The following NAAL chart shows what it means to be an adult with below basic skills. Tasks and abilities of persons with higher literacy levels can be found in Appendix 4.

Level and definition	Key abilities associated with level	Sample tasks typical of level
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BELOW BASIC indicates no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills. Adults at the BELOW BASIC level range from being nonliterate in English to having the abilities listed

Score ranges for BELOW BASIC:

Prose: 0-209

Document: 0-204

Quantitative: 0-234

below:

- locating easily identifiable information in short, commonplace prose texts
- locating easily identifiable information and following written instructions in simple documents (e.g., charts or forms)
- locating numbers and using them to perform simple quantitative operations (primarily addition) when the mathematical information is very concrete and familiar
- searching a short, simple text to find out what a patient is allowed to drink before a medical test
- signing a form
- adding the amounts on a bank deposit slip

"Why don't more adults take advantage of available opportunities to improve their basic skills?" This perplexing question confronts the whole field of adult basic and literacy education. Only 8 % of eligible adults participate in funded literacy programs and, of those who do, most (74 %) leave during the first year (Quigley 1997). "What other area of education could live with such figures?" asks Quigley in his study, *Rethinking Adult Education: the Critical Need for Practice-based Change*.

As much as the issue is recognized by the community, adults with limited literacy skills are often reluctant to identify themselves. One participant said, "The community is so close that everyone knows each other and so people don't like to step forward and become known."

The stigma of low literacy is a concern. "People trying to hide low literacy are not likely to come to a traditional literacy program," one participant explained. Many are ashamed of their low skills. There is a strong sense of embarrassment and a stigma related to low literacy that makes it difficult for people to muster the courage to attend programs."

DRAFT Literacy Needs Assessment for Madison County

New York State has the highest levels of low literacy along with California.

Percent Lacking Basic Prose Literacy Skills by State in 2003

6-10%	11-15%	16-20%	21-25%
Alaska	Alabama	District of Columbia	California
Colorado	Arizona	Florida	New York
Connecticut	Arkansas	Georgia	
Indiana	Delaware	Hawaii	
Iowa	Idaho	Louisiana	
Kansas	Illinois	Mississippi	
Maine	Kentucky	Nevada	
Massachusetts	Maryland	New Jersey	
Michigan	North Carolina	New Mexico	
Minnesota	Oklahoma	Texas	
Missouri	Pennsylvania		
Montana	South Carolina		
Nebraska	Tennessee		
New Hampshire	West Virginia		
North Dakota			
Ohio	US AVERAGE		
Oregon			
Rhode Island			
South Dakota			
Utah			
Virginia			
Washington			
Wisconsin			
Wyoming			

Source: National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL). National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Science United States Dept of Education NCES 2009-482, January 2009

In Madison County adult literacy services are provided by BOCES, funded through the Workforce Investment Act Title 2, and by community based programs supported by a mixture of public and private funding. BOCES services tend to be classroom style and the community based programs are more often small group or one-on-one instruction.

A reporter from the Oneida Dispatch commented, “I have my reporters write at the fourth grade level now. We are trying to get to the simplest explanation of the issue.” This theme is reflected in other organizations as they seek to provide materials at a low readability level to ensure that information is effectively communicated and comprehended.

Access to programs was a key concern of focus group participants. Because of the rural nature of the county and the lack of transportation services many people have no way to get to literacy programs.



“Pooling the resources and skills of all of the Madison County agencies involved in providing literacy services would strengthen each of our individual efforts.”

Karen Fauls-Traynor, Sullivan Free Library

Issues of recruitment, attendance and persistence were raised by many interviewees. Low attendance and low retention seem to be hallmarks of many adult literacy and out-of-school youth programs. Key informants commented that students in adult education and literacy classes come only 2 or 3 times a week for a maximum of 12 hours, despite research indicating that it may take as many as 150 hours of instruction to increase just one grade level. “Student progress in programs offering classes only once or twice a week may not be of sufficient intensity for learners to show improvement and see the value of continuing attendance,” said one provider.

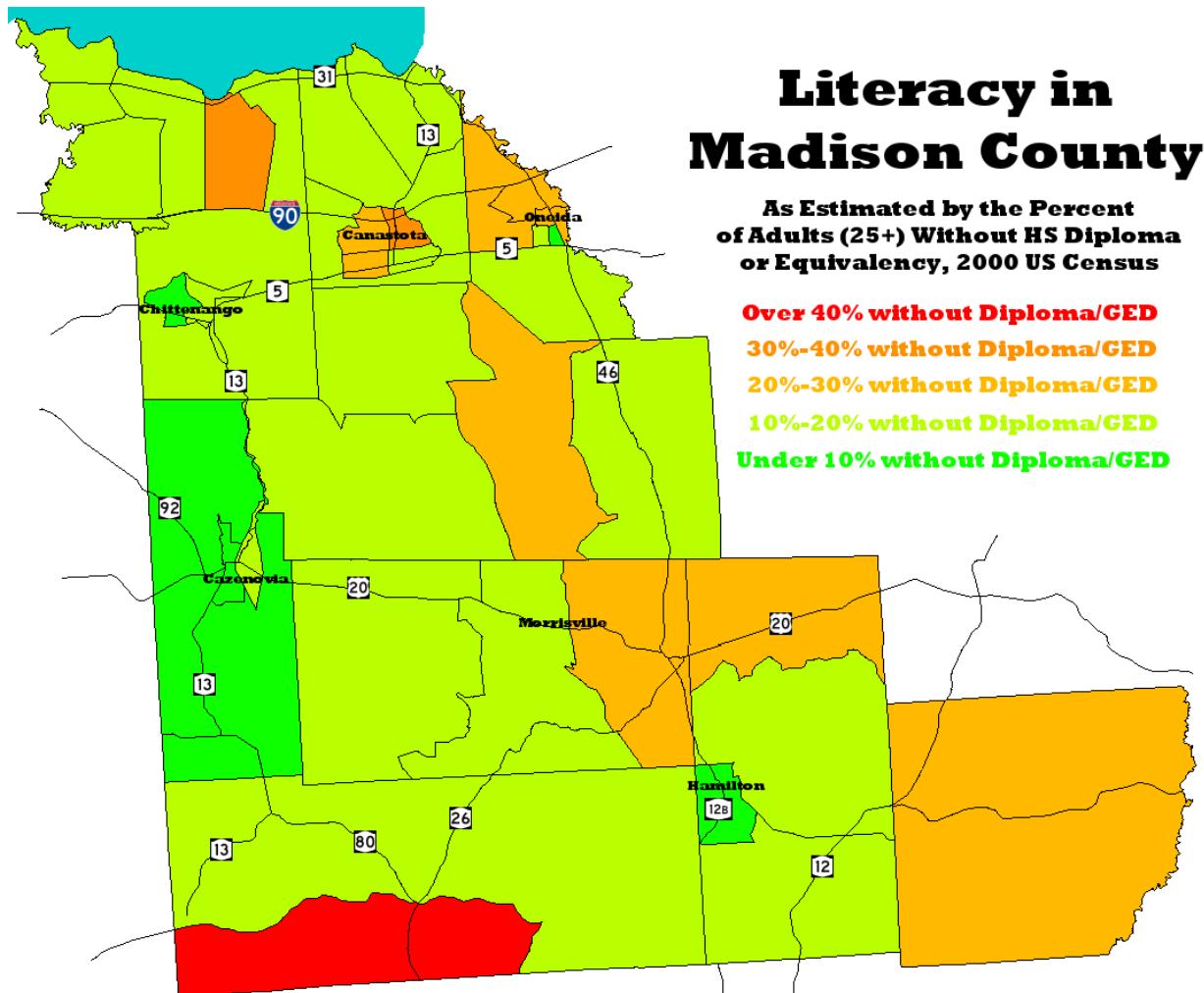
Participants worried that adult programs look like copies of traditional schools where people have had poor educational experiences. Many participants agreed that the ideal situation would be to understand all the needs of each person or family, subsidize those needs, make services intense and relevant to needs, offer childcare and transportation, and provide education, work experience and training simultaneously.

“We know so much more than we did years ago,” said one participant. “Distance learning and technology could really boost the programs.” Several people commented on the need for more drop-in adult education centers with computer labs and teachers with flexible hours on evenings and weekends.

Adult literacy service providers were concerned about reduced budgets and program cuts that seriously impact the effectiveness of the system. With program closings and staff changes, they reported great difficulty sustaining an effective system.

Literacy providers also noted that it is difficult for a person reading at a third grade reading level to achieve eighth grade level literacy skills. Not every person will achieve a GED. Those with limited literacy capacity or serious learning disabilities need help to reach their potential and enroll in appropriate vocational training to become more self-determined in their lives and work.

The map shows distribution of adult literacy by GED or High School Diploma and identifies the geographic areas of the county where more emphasis needs to be placed on increased and effective services.



The southwest area of the county has the highest level of literacy need but there are many areas of the county that need services.

Adult Basic Education and GED programs like Madison County Reads Ahead offer services to adults. They conclude;

- There is an increase in older learners needing help because they are changing jobs
- It takes time to find the right tutor match for individualized learning
- One third of the learners do not continue over time
- Entry level testing puts most students under a sixth grade reading level (Basic or Below Basic)
- It is challenging to track student progress who are tutored one-on-one by volunteers

- Recruiting and training volunteer tutors is an on-going process
- More time needs to be spent on recruiting learners
- Some programs do not have a recruitment and data collection staff member for the level of follow up needed

Programs offer a range of curriculum materials but resources for materials, especially computer-based materials are limited.

In a focus group with adult learners, students spoke appreciatively of the opportunity to be in class. Several had attended more than one program and on the whole students were more satisfied with programs that were smaller and individualized. “A large class did not work for me. I couldn’t concentrate. A one-on-one works for me.” Another learner had attended programs in both Syracuse and Oneida, indicating a level of persistence, “The classes were too big. This program fits what I need.” Other adult students talked of being discouraged and commented that other issues like family, work or incarceration had not allowed them to stay engaged in learning. As learners discussed their long term goals they described both family and job related outcomes. “I wish I could get a GED and a better job,” said one. “I’d like more trade classes that would help you get a better job,” said another.

The National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (NEAEP) reported that available data indicates that nationally between 6 and 10 % of those potentially needing services enrolled in classes. (Review of Adult Education Programs and Their Effectiveness, June, 1995, Mary T. Moore and Michael Stavrianos) In Madison County the figure is even lower - 4.5% - indicating that outreach has not been effective in either encouraging adult learners to attend programs or removing the barriers that prevent adults from attending.

FINDINGS

1. Only 4.5 % of those who could benefit from services are enrolled in basic education or literacy classes.
2. There is not an effective adult literacy network in place to provide coordinated outreach to those in need.
3. Contextualized services that are individualized for each learner’s need to be increased.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Launch an aggressive public awareness campaign to recruit learners and volunteers.
2. Introduce creative opportunities for scheduling classes, contextualized instruction, and distance learning.
3. Build the capacity of the current service providers to serve more students effectively.
4. Identify and secure public and private funding to support recruitment and retention strategies.



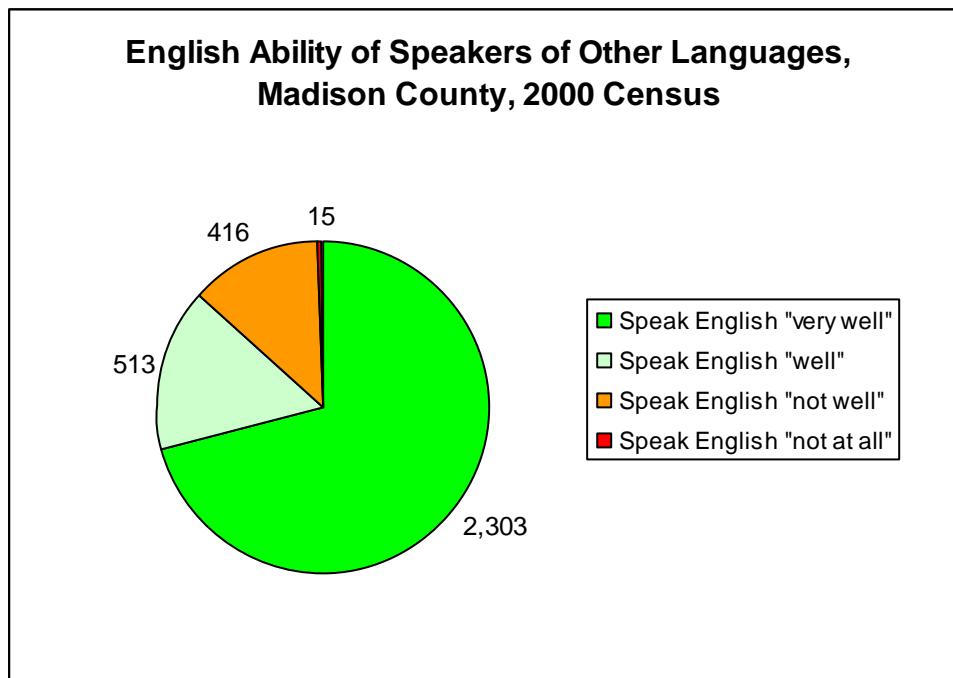
“My vision for Madison County is that every person, young and old, gains an appreciation and enthusiasm for literacy – opening the doors to productivity and opportunity.”

Lisa Seitz, Madison Oneida BOCES

English for Speakers of Other Languages Instruction

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction is not a major need in Madison County. Out of over 60,000 people there are only 431 who report speaking English less than "well" in the 2000 Census. However, BOCES does offer ESOL as does Madison County Reads Ahead, a community-based program. One adult learner commented that she came to Reads Ahead "with my parents who were working on their citizenship classes. I thought I'd come with them and work on my English, too. I've been in the country for eight years and could use help with my writing skills."

The Mohawk Regional Educational Outreach Program serves migrant families in Madison County and provides some ESOL support.



FINDINGS

1. Even though the numbers needing ESOL services are small the current system cannot accommodate all if they chose to enroll.
2. Citizenship courses are only offered in limited locations.
3. Migrant workers and the trend of increasing immigrant populations in the region must be addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Launch an aggressive public awareness campaign to recruit learners and volunteers.
2. Introduce creative opportunities for scheduling classes, contextualized instruction, and distance learning.
3. Build the capacity of the current service providers to serve more ESOL students more effectively.
4. Identify and secure public and private funding to support strategies to strengthen ESOL services.



"Wouldn't it be great if more people in literacy need would feel comfortable using public libraries, for any purpose? There are so many materials and opportunities for literacy moments – at no cost."

Barbara Coger, Hamilton Library

NUMERACY

Throughout the interviews, participants raised issues of limited numeracy. Even at the college level, key informants noted that teachers were seeing an increased need for math remediation.

Numeracy includes the type of math skills needed to function in everyday life in the home, workplace, and community (Withnall, 1995). Students of all ages use math in everyday situations like reading board games or video game instructions, cooking, shopping, crafts, financial transactions, traveling, interpreting information in the media, and taking medications. Once students lack the confidence to succeed in math, however, it is difficult to re-engage their interest.

Learners in focus groups commented that math could be a barrier. One learner said, "I know I am making progress when I can do math problems I couldn't do before."

GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education published the following comments about math instruction (GED Items, 1995):

- A.** Certain topics included in the high-school math curriculum, such as trigonometry, advanced algebra, or calculus, seldom come up in the lives of most adults. At the same time, insufficient attention is paid by schools to developing the estimation skills adults need to handle tasks which do not require precise calculations, and to "number sense" skills, relating the meanings people attach to numbers. Examples of "number sense" would include grasping the big numbers used in discussing corporate or government budget cuts, or small numbers, such as those involved in evaluating risks.
- B.** Most adults, regardless of their occupation or living environment, need to be able to plan, handle, and monitor the use of resources, such as money and supplies, or time and people. Such tasks require people to optimize the use of resources, often in the presence of conflicting goals and demands. The skills needed to handle such tasks often differ markedly from those needed to solve the word problems which schools use to simulate real-world dilemmas.
- C.** Adults often need to be able to handle functional tasks involving numbers embedded in text-comprehending a problem and choosing an action based on data from forms, schedules, manuals, technical, and financial documents. Most high school and adult mathematics instruction, however, tends to rely on textbooks and workbooks which use "distilled" language that does not replicate the types of texts and communicative demands found outside the school.
- D.** Mathematics instruction in the U.S. has traditionally emphasized procedural skills, and paid little attention to development of interpretive skills. Such skills are essential if students are to

become informed citizens who can make sense of verbal or text-based messages that touch on quantitative issues but that do not involve direct manipulation of numbers.

Numeracy focuses on developing conceptual understanding rather than computational prowess. Yet, from comments in focus groups, it was clear that the teaching of math for both children and adults falls short in teaching skills needed for success in life, especially for those students who already have low literacy skills.

The GED Tests measure "major and lasting" educational skills and concepts learned at the high school level that contributes to successful functioning of adults in our society. The traditional mathematics curriculum in high schools focuses on preparing students for college and post-secondary institutions rather than for coping with daily life. Advanced algebra and calculus courses are key to certain career paths, but more than half of U.S. 18-year-olds don't go on to college, and, of those who do, many will not take additional math.

Lynda Ginsburg at the National Center on Adult Literacy, University of Pennsylvania in an article titled 'Thinking About Numeracy Instruction,' commented on the skills of teachers in adult literacy math classes. "Adult numeracy teachers are a varied group. One U.S. national survey of full time adult educators (regardless of teaching assignment) determined that only 64% of the responding teachers felt "prepared" or "very prepared" to teach math. More than half, regardless of the number of years teaching, indicated that they would most want to know more about "number sense" to improve their math teaching (Sabatini, et al., 2000). An earlier survey of adult education programs in the United States showed that 80% of adult learners receive some mathematics-related instruction but only 5% of the instructors in the programs are certified to teach mathematics (Gal & Schuh, 1994).

In addition, learners also may have diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities or at least learning styles that may pose barriers to various modes of instruction. Learner goals and expectations impact their willingness to engage in certain activities and the levels of frustration and/or ambiguity they may be willing to tolerate. Indeed, many learners are comfortable with endless workbook exercises, familiar and well-defined tasks, even if they don't understand why they are doing what they are doing. A potential adult learner in a focus group commented, "I would like to learn math. I don't have much of a mind for math." Other students concurred. Participants suggested that the way we teach math may not be the best for preparing people for success in the subject.

The introduction of technology has made a difference in the teaching of math and especially in the adult education classroom where assignments can be customized to meet specific learning goals. However, smaller programs are less likely to have computer labs, and volunteer programs may not have staff expertise to manage such instruction. Volunteers themselves may suffer from

‘math phobia.’ There is a widespread desire for increased numeracy, and focus group participants requested that this issue be more fully addressed.

FINDINGS

1. Schools are challenged by state math requirements and need new strategies to meet goals.
2. People who have a high school diploma or a GED may still have math challenges.
3. Resources are needed to elevate and support math educators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop strategies to strengthen numeracy education across the lifespan.
2. Identify and secure public and private funding to support strategies for numeracy education.

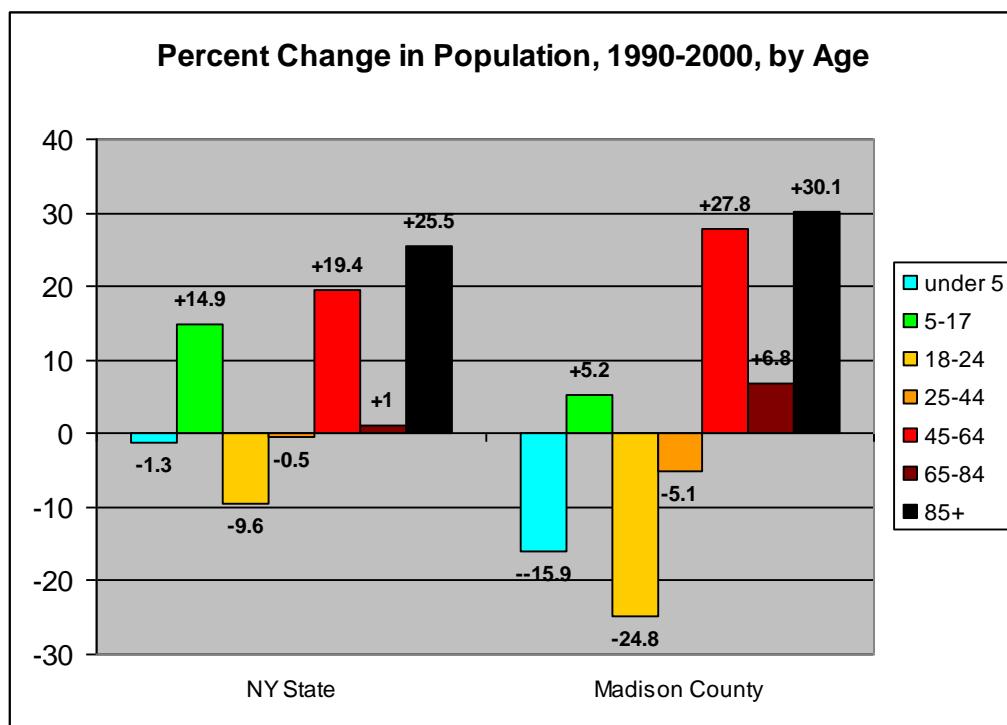


“My vision is to empower young parents to be economically self-sufficient by receiving their GED, to understand the fine art of parenting and to know how to educate their children.”

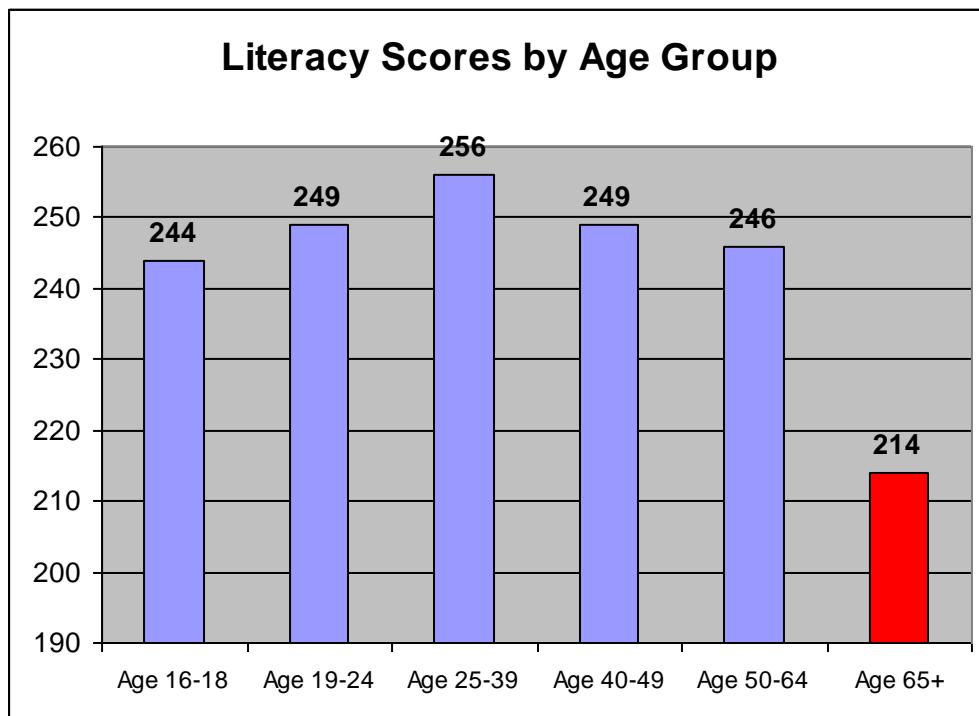
*Patricia Graham, Oneida Public Library –
Standing Tall (family literacy program)*

LITERACY AND SENIOR CITIZENS

Senior citizens often have special literacy needs that go unrecognized. As the chart below demonstrates there has been an increase in the numbers of seniors across the state but an even greater increase in the percentage of population over age 65 in Madison County.



In 2003, NAAL research showed seniors (65+) scored far below any other adult age group in literacy. Their score was significantly lower than teenagers, young adults and those in middle age. Part of this result can be explained by the fact that many seniors grew up in a time when educational opportunities were less available; another reason is that mental skills, including literacy skills, can decline with old age.



Preserving mental functioning is a major concern for seniors. A 2006 survey of American's, ages 63 to 80, for United Healthcare's Secure Horizons found that six out of ten seniors think mental acuity is a major challenge. Seniors are more concerned about staying mentally sharp than about relationship issues, mood disorders or emotional problems that often accompany aging.

The same survey found seven out of ten seniors were concerned about their health and wellbeing, and Alzheimer's was the most feared disease. For seniors without literacy skills to access, navigate and understand health care systems and treatments, these fears are undoubtedly worse. Just 3 % of senior citizens have proficient health literacy skills, and most do not understand medical instructions well. This creates a challenge for health, educational and social service providers.

The Madison County Department of Health commissioned a Community Health Needs Assessment in 2005 through the Upstate Institute at Colgate University (Colgate, 2005). The report identified the elderly as a population in need of special assistance. With 12.6% of the population being 65 and older, and that number forecasted to increase in the county over the next decade, the needs assessment recommended that "the Aging Workgroup of the Priorities Council look at the issues surrounding health access for the aging and continue to look at the needs of the aging population." However, there was no specific reference to increased education and support for those with limited or declining literacy skills in the report.

FINDINGS

1. There is a growing number of seniors in Madison County.
2. Issues of low literacy among seniors have not been effectively addressed.
3. Seniors are in critical need of improved health literacy services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop strategies to strengthen the literacy of the senior population with a special focus on health literacy.
2. Identify and secure public and private funding to support strategies for seniors to improve their literacy skills.



"To see the circle close, to see our community grasp the hands of those who somehow are unable to move from the margins and take their place with the rest of us is what I hope our literacy outreach can accomplish someday."

Cindy McCall, Cazenovia coordinator for Madison County Reads Ahead

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Six percent of adults reported they had been diagnosed or identified as having a learning disability (NAAL,2006). These adults had lower prose, document and quantitative literacy levels than average. Adult literacy instructors in Madison County report there are many more people with learning disabilities who attend programs but have not been diagnosed.

Participants noted many factors affect learning, yet many disabled people are not eligible to receive publicly funded services. “Large numbers of adults need multiple ways of learning and have learning differences that must be considered in instruction,” noted a focus group participant. Service providers emphasized the need to include those with learning disabilities more effectively in adult literacy programs; others said they face great difficulty in determining the need for specialized services for those with learning disabilities. “There is very little training or special accommodations to help people reach their maximum potential,” commented another.

Focus group members did not comment on the availability of screening and diagnostic tools for those with learning differences. However, they frequently raised spoke about the difficulty of identifying both adults and children with learning challenges as well as the need to find better approaches to accommodate different learning styles. Instructors and program managers expressed a need for additional training and resources. Programs that relied on volunteers had a particular need for appropriate training for tutors.

The Madison County Head Start program noted that 45 of the 189 enrolled children had been identified as in need of extra support because of learning disabilities. Yet program staff also noted that funding that supports such services is scheduled to be cut in 2010. A literacy program director noted, “The primary academic issue is learning disabilities.”

The Victims of Violence program supports those with serious mental illness and provides educational support in facilities like Maxwell House and Venture House. Adults in these facilities may have limited literacy, so there is opportunity to increase patients’ educational levels with appropriate literacy education.

Identifying learning differences and disabilities early and working with the school districts to remediate and provide appropriate accommodations can help ensure that students have the best opportunities to succeed.

FINDINGS

1. Learning disabilities screenings are costly and issues of proper diagnosis are challenging.
2. Programs have difficulty customizing instruction for those with learning disabilities.
3. Few instructors have the specialized training and skills needed to address learning disabilities most effectively.
4. Adults with learning disabilities require accommodations that are rarely available in most vocational schools and workplaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide high quality professional development, curriculum and instructional techniques so providers at all levels are able to work effectively with students who have learning disabilities and differences.
2. Identify and secure public and private funding to support strategies to improve services for students with learning disabilities.

LITERACY AND FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES

There are numerous faith-based organizations in the county that offer a limited range of educational and social services. The literacy component of many of these programs is limited, so literacy education is rarely infused into other services.

Some of these programs are highly motivational, encouraging students to understand the connection between reading, speaking, writing, and the events of the world around them. One informant said, “Many faith communities are not quite sure what to do to support literacy. Everyone believes it is important.”

Some faith-based institutions, including synagogues and churches, have early childhood programs. Others support volunteer adult literacy programs and recruit volunteer tutors. However, given the need and the large numbers of faith-based facilities in the county, few are involved in literacy activities. This might be a valuable opportunity for expansion of services where it fits with a congregation’s mission.

FINDINGS

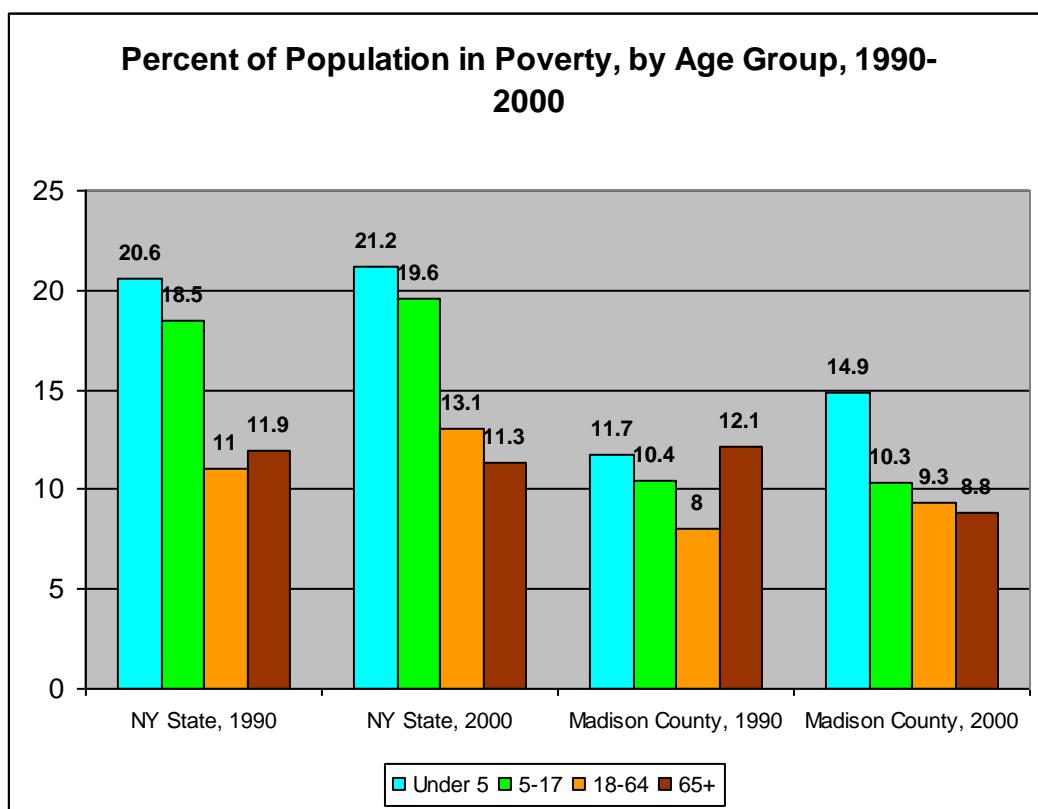
1. Few faith-based organizations are involved in literacy activities.
2. There are opportunities for recruitment of volunteers and mentors.
3. Faith-based leaders may not see congregations as being part of the literacy solution.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Engage faith-based organizations in the creation of the county’s community literacy plan.

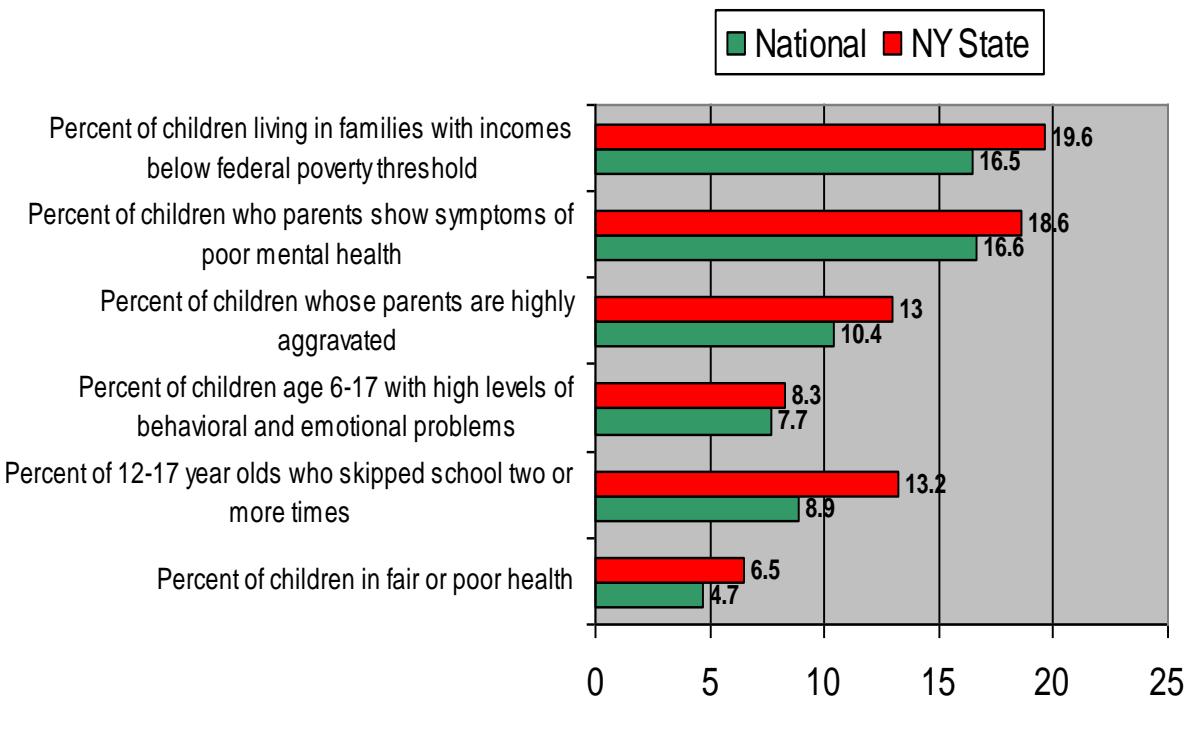
IMPACT OF POVERTY ON LITERACY

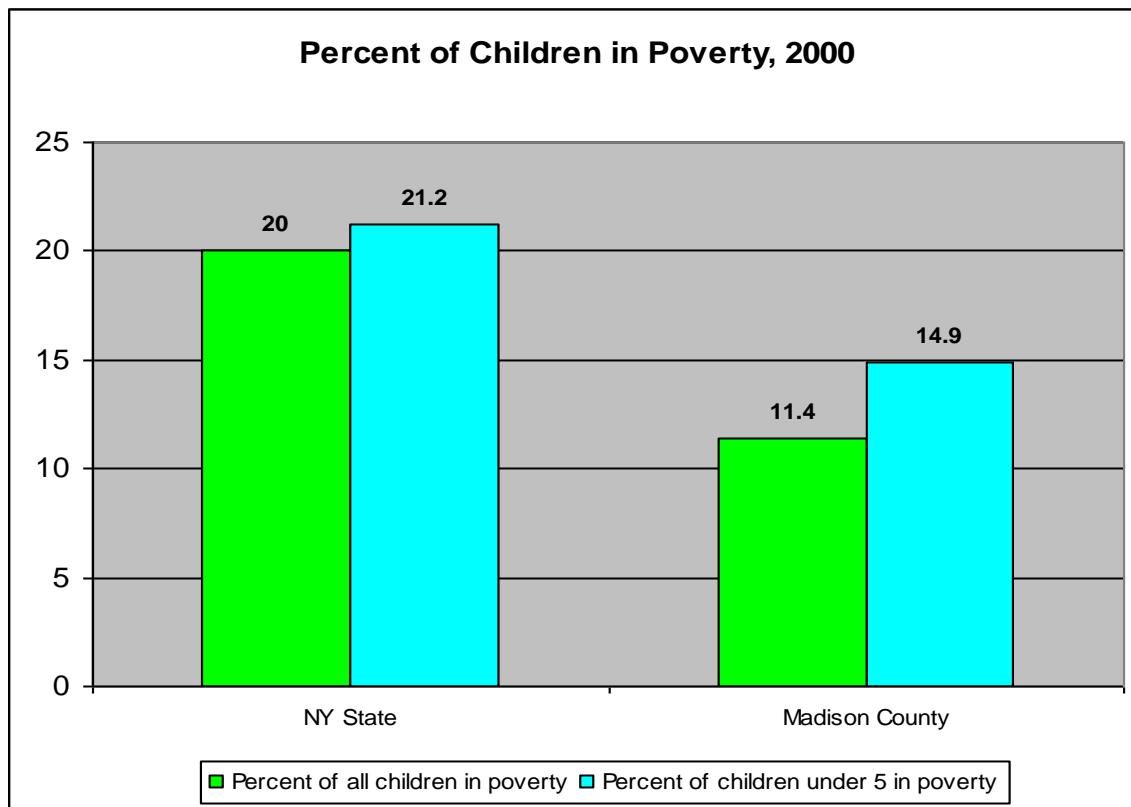
The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL, 2003), confirmed that those with the highest literacy levels also have the highest incomes and that literacy rates are the lowest among the poorest people in a community. The study also found a relationship between literacy and participation in public assistance, confirming the 1995 report from Barton and Jenkins. The main public assistance program examined was Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) which supports families with children, especially single mothers. In the NAAL study, 10% of the women at the Below Basic Prose Level had previously received public assistance, compared to just 3 % of women in the Proficient Prose Literacy Level.



Over 10% of Madison County residents live in poverty, with 4.3% living in extreme poverty (incomes below 50% of the poverty level) (City-Data, 2007). While the county has lower poverty rates than New York State (10.3% vs. 13.7%), its child poverty rates increased between 1990 and 2000, growing from 11.7 to 14.9 percent. (U.S. Census, 2000). There is a higher level of children under five years old in poverty than of all children in the county and this must be considered in terms of providing services.

**Data from Urban Institute's
National Survey of America's Families, 2002**





Programs are impacted by budget cuts. The budget of Community Action Partnerships' 'Starting Together' was cut by \$50,000 in 2008, severely reducing the number of families supported by the program. At the same time, all literacy providers have participated in the Bridges Out of Poverty training which provides strategies for organizations working to assist families in poverty.

ZIP CODES AND CENSUS TRACTS WITH LOWEST LITERACY LEVELS

Compared to New York State, Madison County has a lower proportion of high-income households. However, over 28% of households had an income under \$25,000 at the 2000 census. A focus group participant noted that, “Some areas of the county have deep pockets of poverty, and people suffer feelings of shame and embarrassment. The way we relate to each other is critical.”

In an article in *The Post-Standard* on Monday, February 2009, Sapna Kollali reports on the increasing number of free and reduced meals to students in Central New York as a result of the economic crisis. “School food service directors across Central New York said they have seen more applications this year, compared to last year. Morrisville-Eaton’s rate is up more than 6 percentage points. Nearly 52% of children are currently receiving a free or reduced-price meal, one of the highest the district has seen in recent years, Superintendent of Morrisville-Eaton School District Michael Drahos said.”

Men and women who live in zip codes with the lowest literacy levels also live with high poverty. Services designed to meet the specific needs of adult learners in these neighborhoods are urgently needed. Individual learning plans supported by one-on-one instruction contextualized to learner needs are the exception rather than the rule.

FINDINGS

1. Programs supporting families who live in poverty have been subject to budget cuts and reduced services.
2. Children’s poverty rates are increasing in the county.
3. Zip codes with the lowest literacy levels are also those with the highest poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop strategies to meet the needs of families in areas/zip codes with high poverty.
2. Identify and secure public and private funding to support strategies for meeting literacy needs of families who live in poverty.

LITERACY, CRIME AND SAFETY

Approximately 26,000 felony offenders are released from New York's state prisons each year. The Upstate New York area is home to many families of incarcerated men and women, including children who are (or were) in foster care or without adequate family support. There are two incarceration facilities in Madison County. Madison County Correctional Facility in Wampsville is the county jail and Camp Georgetown in Georgetown is the state prison.

The New York Department of Correctional Services, (DOCS) reports that it needs literacy services for the inmate population. In New York State alone, almost 14,000 inmates are functionally illiterate and another 18,000 read below the eight-grade level. Over 35,000 inmates have not completed high school. Few have job skills necessary for legitimate employment.

Study after study has shown that inmates who earn a high-school degree or successfully complete a substance abuse program in prison have significantly lower recidivism rates than inmates who do not complete these programs. Despite this evidence, New York DOCS reports that approximately 4,800 inmates are actively waiting for academic programs, 9,300 inmates are actively waiting to enroll in vocational programs, and 11,300 inmates are actively waiting to receive substance abuse treatment (ASAT).

All persons incarcerated in New York State Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) facilities are entitled to high school or GED training until the age of twenty-one. In Madison County, jail education programs are offered to all inmates regardless of age. Inmates also participate in work release/job training programs. These programs are operated by instructional staff from BOCES. The County does not have a prison so sentenced Madison County residents are sent to other facilities. Only parole programs support re-entering ex-prisoners in Madison County.

The impact of education on recidivism increases with the level of education attained. Most communities lack sufficient supports and programs offering literacy and vocational training for men and women re-entering communities after they have been in prison. These men and women need education, housing, employment, public assistance, substance abuse and mental health treatment if they are to succeed and not be caught up in criminal activities. When men and women are prepared for re-entry success, both the individual and the community benefits.

New York State plans to reduce recidivism by requiring DOCS inmates to meet the education standards for Federal prisons. These standards:

1. Require inmates who do not have a GED or high school diploma to attend an adult literacy program for a minimum of 120 calendar days or until a GED is achieved, whichever occurs first.

This policy creates incentives to encourage inmates to complete the literacy program. This proposal would require 79 additional teachers, and its annual cost would be \$3 million.

2. Expand vocational technology schools to all general confinement facilities. There are currently only 14 Vocational Technology shops that exist in the DOCS system. The program trains inmates in a wide variety of skills related to the building, repairing, and upgrading of computer hardware and remediation of computer software problems. These skills are in great demand and are likely to lead to a good paying job on the “outside”. The program also allows DOCS to meet some of its own computer needs at a significantly reduced cost. Expanding the vocational computer technology program to all general confinement, maximum, and medium security facilities would require 28 additional vocational instructors at a cost of approximately \$1.9 million.

Crime in Madison County in 2005 is focused on burglary and theft perpetrated by both adults and youth (city-data.com):

- Murders: 0
- Rapes: 4
- Robberies: 1
- Assaults: 7
- Burglaries: 85
- Thefts: 148
- Auto thefts: 8

One of six factors identified as important predictors of delinquency among our nation's youth was poor educational performance (Lieb, 1994). Hodges, Giulotti and Porpotage (1994) concurred: “One recognized characteristic of juveniles incarcerated in correctional and detention facilities is their poor experience with elementary and secondary education.” Through an examination of the literacy levels of the prison population, a comparison of literacy levels of the prison population with non-prisoners, an understanding of correctional education, and measures of correctional program effectiveness, two conclusions are inescapable: One, literacy plays a crucial role in reducing recidivism among persons released from prison; and two, there is a critical need for educational services in the criminal justice system.

Focus group participants spoke of the value of linking issues of literacy and community safety.

The Victims of Violence program in Madison County provides support for children and adults and includes education and financial and vocational services.

FINDING

1. There are no programs to support re-entering ex-offenders in the community with the exception of parole programs. Literacy skills development is needed for probationers and parolees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop strategies to support probationers and parolees with limited literacy skills.
2. Identify and secure public and private funding to support those strategies.



“I never dreamed that when we started the literacy program at the Oneida Library seven years ago that it would grow to the proportion that it has today.”

Judy Donnelly, Oneida Public Library – Project Read

HEALTH LITERACY

Health literacy is defined by Healthy People 2010 as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions” (Healthy People, 2008). The American Medical Association Council of Scientific Affairs defines functional health literacy as “the ability to read and comprehend prescription bottles, appointment slips, and other essential health-related materials required to successfully function as a patient” (AMA, 2008).

Among adults receiving Medicare and Medicaid benefits, 27% and 30% respectively had below basic health literacy levels and that those in poverty had lower literacy levels than the rest of the population (NAAL, 2003).

Persons with limited literacy skills are more likely to:

- Have difficulty navigating the complexity of healthcare systems
- Misunderstand oral instructions and written instructions from healthcare practitioners
- Access healthcare support that might be designed for those in poverty or with low literacy
- Fail to complete courses of treatment or follow medical orders
- Have disproportionately poor health

The overwhelming majority of focus group participants spoke about the impact of low literacy on health care in Madison County. They considered lack of health literacy a crisis in the community that costs time and resources that the community cannot afford. The Madison County Department of Health commissioned a Community Health Needs Assessment in 2005 through the Upstate Institute at Colgate University ([Colgate](#), 2005). Low literacy was fundamental to several issues noted in the report, including:

- Lack of access to and awareness of health care systems and supports;
- Failure to keep appointments, poor attitudes about preventative health, confusion about Medicare processes;
- Need to educate families about health with materials written at basic reading levels;
- Reasons for relatively high infant mortality rates in the county.

The Community Health Needs Assessment also noted that Madison County has a higher rate of cigarette smoking and obesity than the state. “Health education must be a top priority for

Madison County. Public health programs to improve lifestyle choices should focus on decreasing cigarette smoking, reducing alcohol abuse and promoting exercise and healthy food choices for both adults and children" (Colgate, 2005).

Many people mentioned the need for public awareness and outreach related to health literacy. An example of such outreach is Community Action Partnership, which provides screening and support in hospitals with materials written at a sixth grade reading level to assist those with limited literacy skills. Patients may only be identified as having literacy issues when they are not compliant with their medications or other health instructions. This can be life threatening.

Prevention education was an issue addressed by focus group participants and several programs were described that support teens. The rates for colonoscopy, mammograms and other preventative measures are low in the county. Suicide mortality for both adolescents and adults in the county are relatively high, reflecting the isolation of rural living. Education and support are key issues in improving the health of a community and yet there are few prevention programs to address this critical issue.

Physicians being reimbursed for their services by insurance companies, Medicaid or Medicare are not paid when they spend extra time with patients, yet it takes much longer to see a patient with low English ability or low literacy skills.

One bright light is the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program and Stop Teen Pregnancy (STOP) which provide educational programs for teens, parents and service providers. Collaboratively developed by Liberty Resources and the Madison County Youth Bureau, the services are provided in Canastota, Stockbridge, Morrisville, DeRuyter and Brookfield school districts.

FINDINGS

1. Low literacy in Madison County seriously impacts health.
2. Mechanisms are not in place to effectively increase health literacy programs.
3. Healthcare practitioners need training to increase their awareness of the issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop strategies to effectively increase health literacy programs and support healthcare practitioners and literacy providers in increasing awareness of the issue.
2. Identify and secure public and private funding to support health literacy strategies.



“Literacy gives an individual the opportunity to design their destiny. To be an overcomer – a victor, not a victim of the hand they have been dealt.”

Carla Gualtieri, Madison Oneida BOCES

FINANCIAL LITERACY

In Madison County, key informants noted that financial literacy is a growing need of the community, especially with the national housing foreclosure crisis and homeowners' inability to make mortgage repayments. Inadequate financial literacy creates enormous challenges for many Americans, especially those with limited reading and numeracy skills.

In 2003, the Financial Literacy and Education Commission was established to improve financial literacy and education in the United States, and in January 2008, President Bush created a new Council on Financial Literacy. Still the problem persists. A Jump\$tart survey found that only 1 in 6 Americans had ever taken any class about personal finance, and only three states require students to take such courses (although there are a number of financial literacy bills working their way through state legislatures). Naill Ferguson, in *The Ascent of Money*, writes that it is a "well-established fact that a substantial proportion of the general public is ignorant of finance."

A focus group participant commented, "In Madison County, those with limited literacy skills and limited resources often face the most difficult economic situations. Making decisions about credit issues, maintaining home ownership, paying mortgages and repaying loans are challenging for anyone, let alone those lacking literacy skills to understand the systems that could provide support." For example, Madison County is the recipient and administrator of a Community Development Block Grant that funds a First Time Home Buyer Assistance Program. The program's mission is to assist qualified low-income residents and workers in purchasing owner-occupied homes in Madison County. Yet some applicants have trouble filling out the forms for this program.

Financial literacy exercises are included in many adult education workbooks, but the exercises are often given in isolation from "real life." Instructors do not have specific financial literacy training to answer complex questions in more than a rudimentary way. Many participants commented on the value of contextualizing learning around issues that are important for individuals, especially related to financial literacy. Many noted a need for more integration of financial literacy skills into adult education classrooms.

There are a limited number of financial literacy programs available in the county. One is the budget counseling program offered by Community Action Partnership; another is the Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) provided through Colgate University and the Department of Social Services for recipients of the Earned Income Tax Credit. Consumer Credit Counseling of Central New York provides individual credit/budget counseling services and educational programs in the area.

However, these efforts reach only a small number of the men, women and youth who might benefit from them. Increased financial literacy services and support are crucial, especially in areas of high poverty and low literacy.

FINDINGS

1. Madison County financial literacy programs are not sufficient to meet the needs of its residents.
2. More contextualized financial literacy in adult and youth programs is needed.
3. With the growing mortgage crisis and limited understanding about the impact of predatory lending, the need for financial literacy, especially in communities with high poverty rates, has increased.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop strategies to effectively increase financial literacy programs and support the community in increasing awareness of the issue.
2. Identify and secure public and private funding to support financial literacy strategies, particularly in communities where many families are poor.



“I believe people will enjoy a fulfilling and self-sufficient life if they can acquire a high level of literacy relating to life skills.”

Diane Ryan, Community Action Partnership of Madison County

TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER LITERACY

The digital divide has compounded the gap between rich and poor, as well as the gap between those with basic skills and those without. The 2003 NAAL survey found that 51 percent of adults with Below Basic document literacy and 43 percent of adults with Below Basic quantitative literacy believed that their job opportunities were limited 'a lot' by their lack of computer skills. Adults who had completed information technology courses with certifications had higher average document and quantitative literacy scores than adults who had not. Most computer training courses require a basic literacy level for participation and many manuals are written at a level too high for persons with limited skills to comprehend.

NAAL (2003) also reported that the percentages of adults living with children who had a computer in their home with word processing capability or Internet access increased with each increasing literacy level. A focus group participant noted that, "many of our students still do not have computers at home."

As computer prices continue to decrease and online access continues to expand, the digital divide may be starting to narrow. Participants noted that many computer labs in schools and businesses are not in use in the evenings and on weekends. They represent an underutilized community resource.

Accessing computer training was a plus for several of the adult learners interviewed. There is far less stigma attached to computer courses than there is to literacy courses. Adults and youth selecting to enroll in a 'computer class' for literacy and GED activities are not only learning the basics of computer use, but they have access to computer assisted basic skills instruction.

There was little discussion about the possibility of distance learning as a possible partial solution to the challenge of access and transportation in a rural county. The benefits of distance learning have been widely discussed among the adult education providers. Several distance learning sites have been established, which may represent a potential capacity building strategy. For learners uncomfortable with managing their learning independently, a blended learning approach with some visits with instructors and counselors might be considered as well.

FINDINGS

1. There is no coordinated county-wide computer literacy program.
2. There are insufficient computer literacy programs and resources to meet needs.
3. Schools and colleges with computer labs are not open to the community in the evenings and weekends.
4. Distance learning is an under-utilized strategy for a rural county.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop strategies to effectively increase computer literacy programs.
2. Explore distance learning opportunities.
3. Identify and secure public and private funding to support technological strategies.



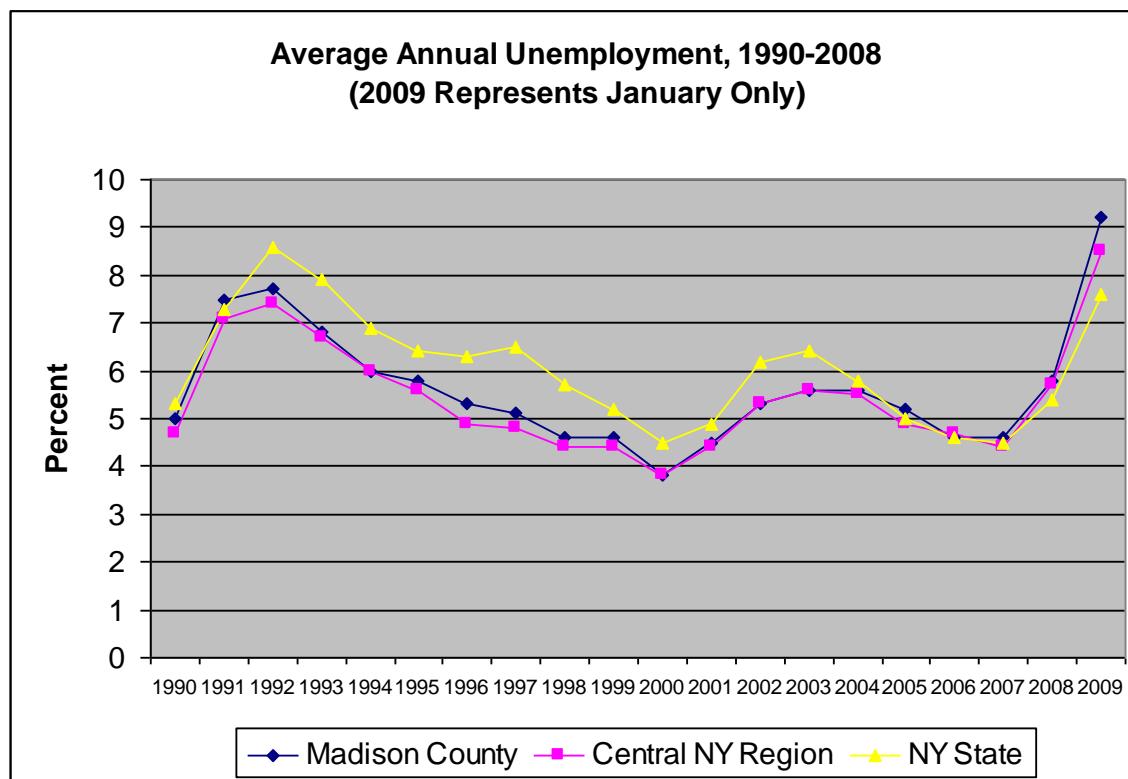
“I would like to see that all Madison County residents have access to excellent literacy programs, enabling them to gain the skills required to lead a productive life!”

Amy Barsha, Morrisville State College – SUNY

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF LOW LITERACY

Literacy is the foundation for success in the workplace, and people need strong literacy skills for a community to thrive. The positive economic effects of literacy, however, depend not only upon academic success, but also upon the ability of men and women to apply learned skills at work. While there are very few people with no literacy skills in the Madison County area, there are many with such limited skills that they are unable to meet employer's needs.

Without a skilled workforce in the area the current economic crisis is causing unemployment rates to rise.



January 2009 unemployment rates were 7.6% in New York State, 8.5% in the Central New York region, and 9.2% in Madison County, a level not seen since January 1994. The 9.2% represents some 3,400 people in the county looking for work.

Strategies to develop a skilled workforce are not in place yet. Good federal programs like YouthBuild are out of reach because the community does not meet the eligibility requirements for the grant but does have high numbers of students who would benefit from such programs. The county lacks contextualized programs tied to jobs and vocational skills.

MAJOR PRIVATE EMPLOYERS IN MADISON COUNTY

Data from the Madison County website provides the following information about employers in the County (Madison County, 2007)

EMPLOYER	LOCATION	APPROX # OF EMPLOYEES
Oneida Healthcare Center	Oneida	888
Colgate University	Hamilton	775
ESCO Turbine Technologies (manufacturing)	Chittenango	413
Cazenovia College	Cazenovia	386
Wal-Mart	Oneida	375
Community Memorial Hosp.	Hamilton	370
Ferris Industries (manufacturing)	Munnsville	299
Madison-Cortland NYSARC (manufacturing)	Oneida	270
Marquardt Switches (electronics)	Cazenovia (T. Nelson)	257
Oneida Ltd. (distribution)	Oneida & Sherrill	250
Diemolding (manufacturing)	Canastota & Wampsville	235
Manth-Brownell (manufacturing)	Kirkville	180
Dielectric Laboratories (manufacturing)	Cazenovia (T. Nelson)	162
Owl Wire & Cable (manufacturing)	Canastota	161
H.P. Hood (dairy products)	Oneida	156

Other employers include: Continental Cordage (Cazenovia), Stearns & Wheler (Environmental Engineers & Scientists (Cazenovia), P& C Foods (Cazenovia, Oneida, Canastota, Chittenango), Oneida Molded Plastics (Oneida), Morrisville Auxiliary Corp. (pvt. service staff employer of SUNY Morrisville), Pyrotek (manufacturing, Canastota), Vantine Studios (commercial photography, Hamilton), New York Bus Sales (North Chittenango), Smith-Lee (manufacturing, Oneida), Queensboro Farms (dairy, Canastota).

Major public sector employers are Madison County government (600-700 employees, mostly in Wampsville, some in Morrisville and Oneida) and the professional staff of SUNY Morrisville (580 employees), as well as the several public school districts (numbers?).

Existing industrial parks are located in Canastota (Canastota Industrial Park), Hamilton (Hamilton Air Park), Oneida (Oneida Business Park), and outside Cazenovia (Trush Park in the Town of Nelson). An additional industrial/office park is under development in Lakeport (Town of Sullivan).

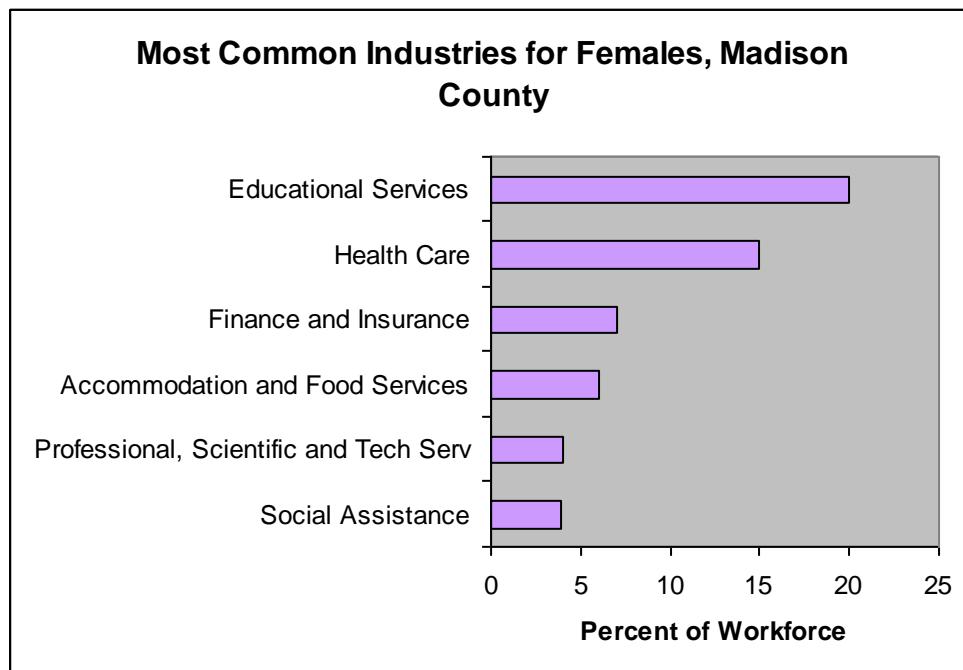
The Oneida Indian Nation

The Oneida Indian Nation, employing some 4,777 persons, is located between Madison and Oneida Counties. Turning Stone Casino is the major enterprise of the Nation. Since the Resort and Casino opened in 1993, the Nation has infused more than \$4.7 billion into the local economy through direct spending on wages, outside vendors, capital improvements and construction. In fiscal year 2008, spending with outside vendors, including capital improvements and construction, totaled more than \$433 million. Of that total, nearly \$250 million was spent with businesses in New York State. The Nation spent more than \$118 million with Oneida County vendors; \$22.5 million with Onondaga County vendors; and \$9.2 million with Madison County vendors. The Nation provides social and educational services and runs a number of successful businesses helping to support the regional economy. The Nation's 4,777 employees earned \$126.2 million in wages during fiscal 2008, which ended September 30th. Revenues from Turning Stone and the Nation's other business enterprises support programs for Oneida Members, including educational and housing programs, health services, and programs and services for Oneida children and elders (www.oneidanation.org (2008)).

Agriculture

Agriculture is a major industry in the county. The average size of farms in Madison County is 229 acres. This translates into the following economic results:

- Average value of agricultural products sold per farm: \$83,929
- Average total farm production expenses per farm: \$69,333
- Average age of principal farm operators: 54 years



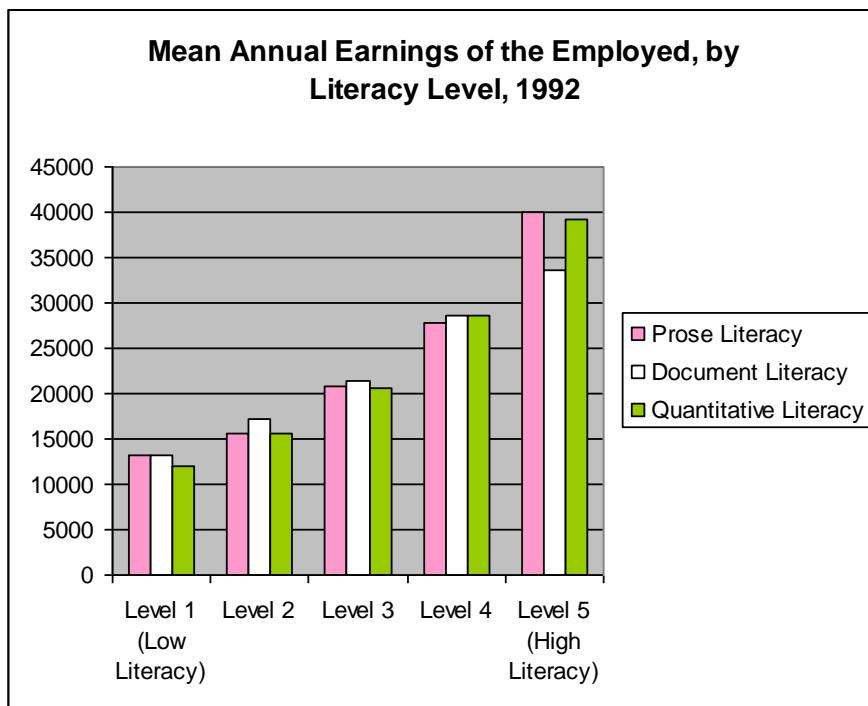
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce literacy is the combination of skills needed to secure, maintain, and advance one's career to fully participate in the economy. Necessary skills include English language proficiency, reading, writing, problem solving, math, and use of information technologies, as well as understanding the specialized sector vocabulary and having the soft skills needed for workplace success. Soft skills were noted by the business community as the most important skills to bring to the workplace, though they agreed that basic literacy is needed to enroll in soft skills and pre-employment training.

Barriers to entering the workforce include not only limited academic skills but also issues of transportation, childcare, language, health and attitude toward work. These issues are serious concerns for employers, as well as for job seekers with no tradition of workplace success. The link between literacy and prosperity is clear. Madison County is starting to consider the impact of the impending baby boomer retirement. ETS projects that within the next decade the United States will be 12 million short of entry level skilled workers. Many local companies have an aging workforce which will become a major issue in the next several years as baby boomers begin to retire.

Nationwide, the basic educational level required for currently available positions is a minimum of two years of college. This increases every year as more high tech jobs are introduced and

employers transform workplaces to increase productivity. Literacy levels have a direct impact on earning power as can be seen from the following chart.



These patterns are not only present on an individual level, but on a communitywide level as well. A rise of 1% in literacy scores leads to a 2.5% rise in labor productivity and a 1.5% rise in GDP per person (The Economist, August 28, 2004).

The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) provides workforce recruitment and job training programs and targeted training and retraining for specific employment opportunities. WIB works with new and expanding businesses and businesses undergoing economic conversion. WIB's funding for low skilled job seekers has declined over recent years and it is severely limited in the opportunities it provides for people reading below an eighth grade reading level. The Economic Stimulus Bill of 2009 may provide additional resources for these job-seekers.

Employers in focus groups expressed concern that employees do not meet needs required for success on the job, especially in math. One area where skilled employees were needed was in preparing pipeline for manufacturing. But applicants lacked higher skills needed for the work.

Mohawk Valley Community College is working with employers to meet their needs. Eight employers are participating in a new Computer Numeric Controlled (CNC) program, four in Madison County and four in Onondaga County. This federally-subsidized CNC program is being offered at \$150 per employee for 147 hours of training.



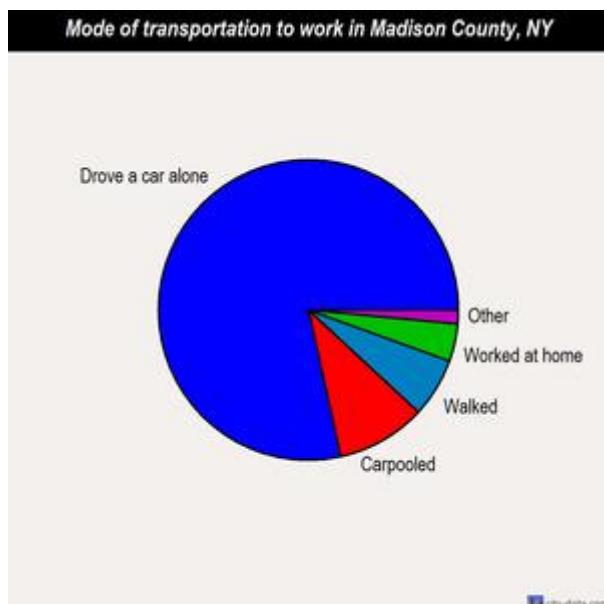
“One hundred percent literacy in Madison County would mean an informed populace on political, social, and educational issues. A high literacy rate would improve many facets of life. The effect would also benefit the children, therefore breaking the cycle of illiteracy.”

Diane Belusar, Oneida Area Zonta Club

Business focus group participants said, “Work readiness needs to be a part of any literacy program because that is what employers need.” Others commented that for workforce preparation to be effective:

- Transportation issues must be addressed – the number one issue! Public transportation is rudimentary at best, and it is tied to shift changes at major employers
- Employees need pre-testing/screening to identify potential skills
- Employers need community educational resources to help their employees achieve the skill levels (8.9 grade level in reading and math) needed to succeed and progress on the job. High school diplomas with at least a 8.9 grade level in reading and math
- The community needs alternatives to GED classroom settings; needs to bring training to the work site or where students live/work.
- Community leaders need to deliver messages that learning is a life-long process
- Literacy needs to be embedded in everything that Madison County residents do.

Transportation to get to work/training programs includes the following (City-data.com):



Means of transportation to work

- Drove a car alone: 25,076 (78%)
- Carpooled: 3,073 (10%)
- Bus or trolley bus: 160 (1%)
- Taxi: 13 (0%)
- Motorcycle: 9 (0%)
- Bicycle: 63 (0%)
- Walked: 2,039 (6%)
- Other means: 218 (1%)
- Worked at home: 1,285 (4%)

FINDINGS

1. Strategies to create a skilled workforce are not in place. Employers are concerned that employees do not have the level of skills needed, especially in math.
2. Contextualized programs tied to jobs and vocational skills are lacking. Few programs provide basic vocational information, job seeking skills and soft skills.
3. Literacy program need to include job-readiness training.
4. Transportation is the number one issue! Public transportation is rudimentary at best, and it is tied to shift changes at major companies.
5. Employers need to pre-test/screen potential employees to identify their skills.
6. Employers need community educational resources to help employees acquire skills needed for success on the job (high school diploma with at least an 8.9 grade level in reading and math).
7. Alternatives to GED classroom settings are needed to bring training to the work site or student location.
8. Community leaders need to deliver messages that learning is a life-long process.
9. Literacy needs to be embedded in every facet of community life.

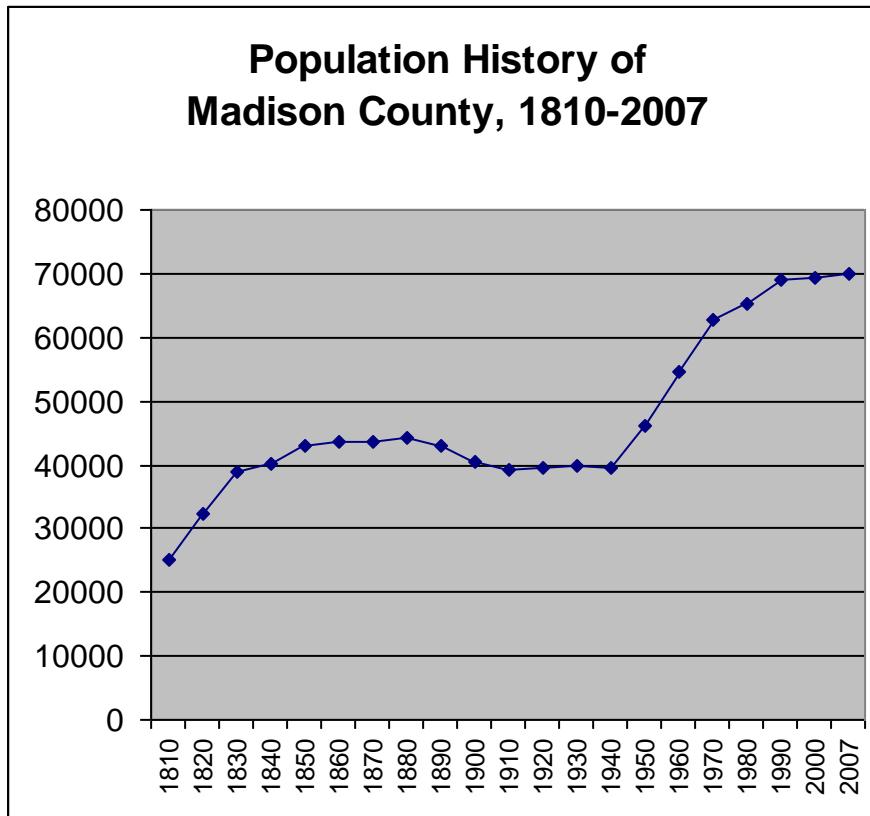
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Formalize and streamline the route from school to college and work for ease of access and navigation by learners. Encourage collaboration among parents, schools, alternative programs, the Workforce Investment Board, colleges, employers, and youth
2. Develop strategies to effectively increase workplace and vocational literacy programs with an emphasis on numeracy education
3. Identify and eliminate transportation barriers (e.g. support an increase in the volunteer base, trip-specific transportation for education, and support innovative programs such as Community Action Partnership)
4. Launch a public awareness campaign to increase the community's understanding of the economic impact of literacy skills.
5. Strengthen the literacy component of community programs by infusing literacy into all activities.

6. Identify and secure public and private funding to support workforce development strategies.

POPULATION CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

Madison County is a rural area close to the two urban centers of Syracuse and Utica. The population climbed steeply from 1945 to 1985 and has leveled off in recent years.



The county has grown at a much slower rate than the rest of the state. Between 1990 and 2000, the state population grew by 5.5%, but Madison County's population grew at only one tenth the rate.

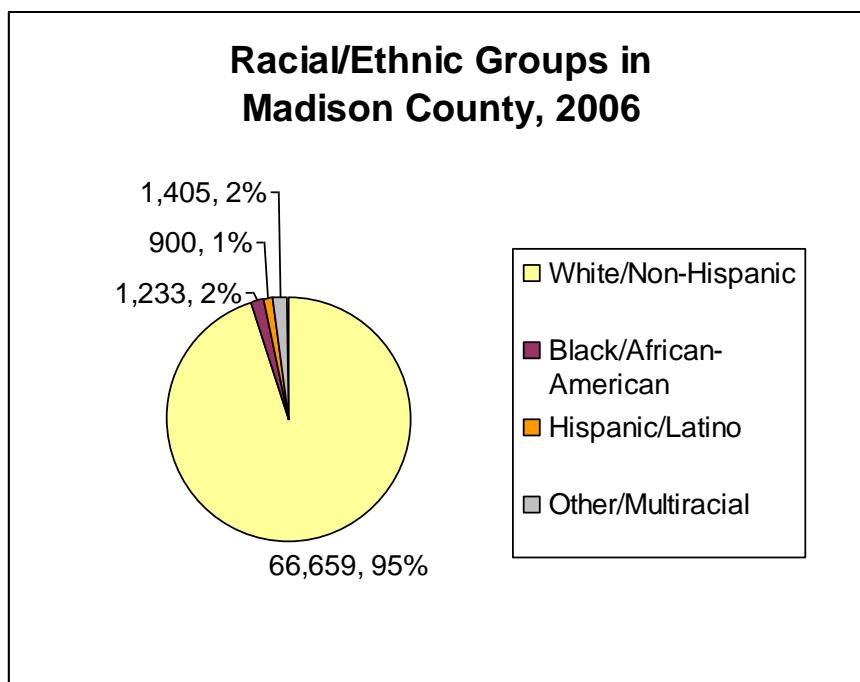
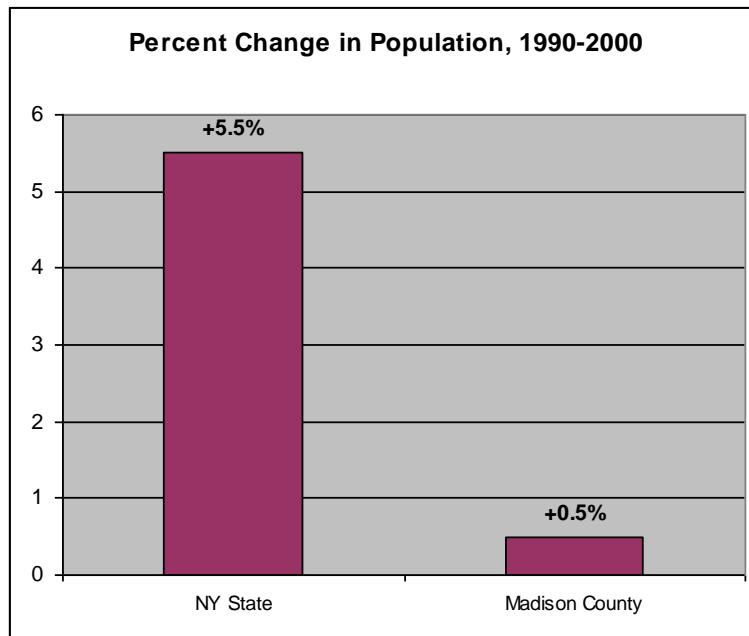
The median age of residents in 2007 is 37 years old. (Males: 36 years old, Females: 38 years old) The median age for White residents is 38 years old; Black residents is 20 years old; American Indian residents is 51 years old; Hispanic or Latino residents is 25 years old; and other race residents is 20 years old. (City-data, 2008)

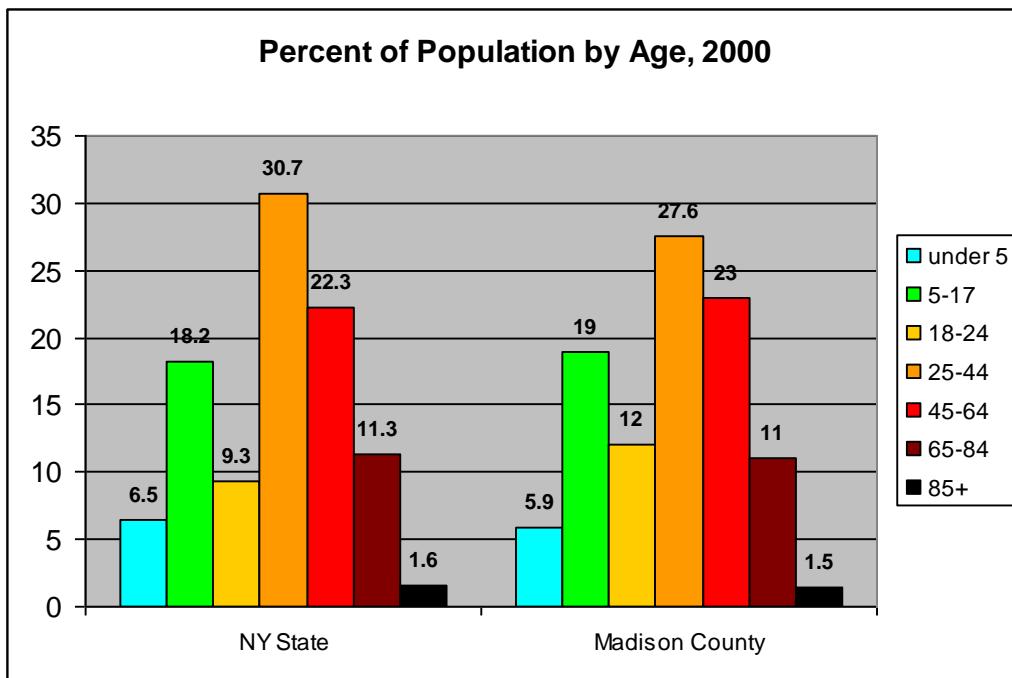
Number of foreign born residents: 1,558 (56% are naturalized citizens)

Madison County: 2.2%

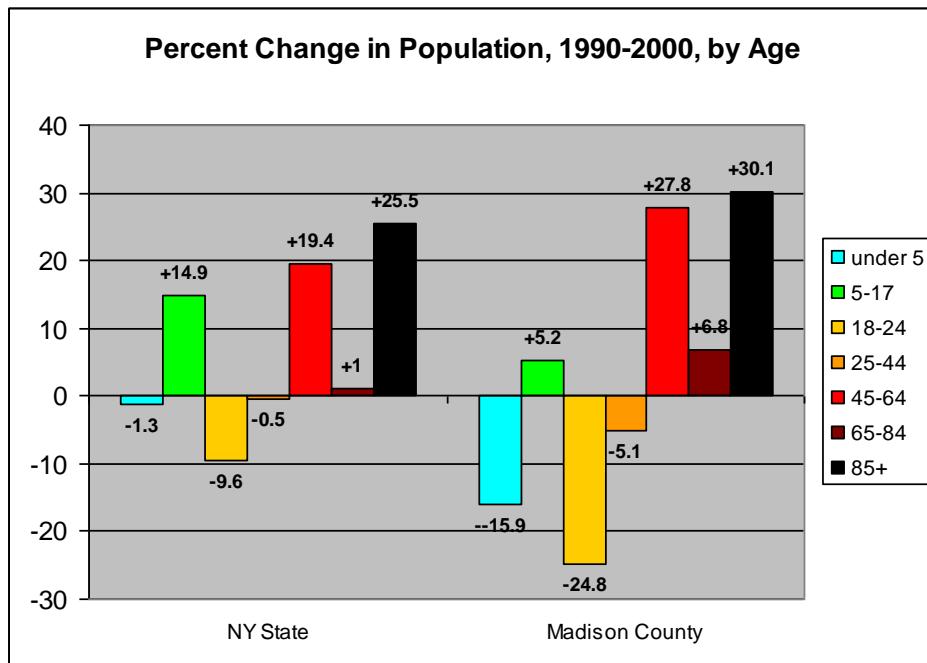
New York State: 20.4%

By far the largest ethnic population represented in the county is white, at 95%, with 2% African American and 1% Latino.





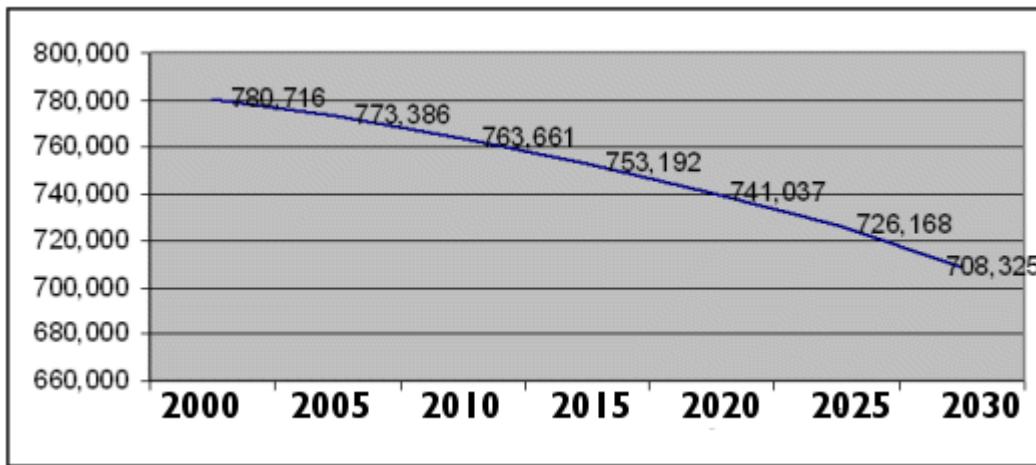
Breaking down the population by age group, Madison County closely mirrors the state population. 27.6 % of the population is between 25 and 44 years old.



Between 1990 and 2000, Madison County saw large increases in its older population while the number of young people declined significantly.

The New York State Department of Economic Development funds the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research to produce population projections as part of the New York Statistical Information System Data program. Current projections, produced in 2002, cover the period 2000 to 2030 in 5-year increments.

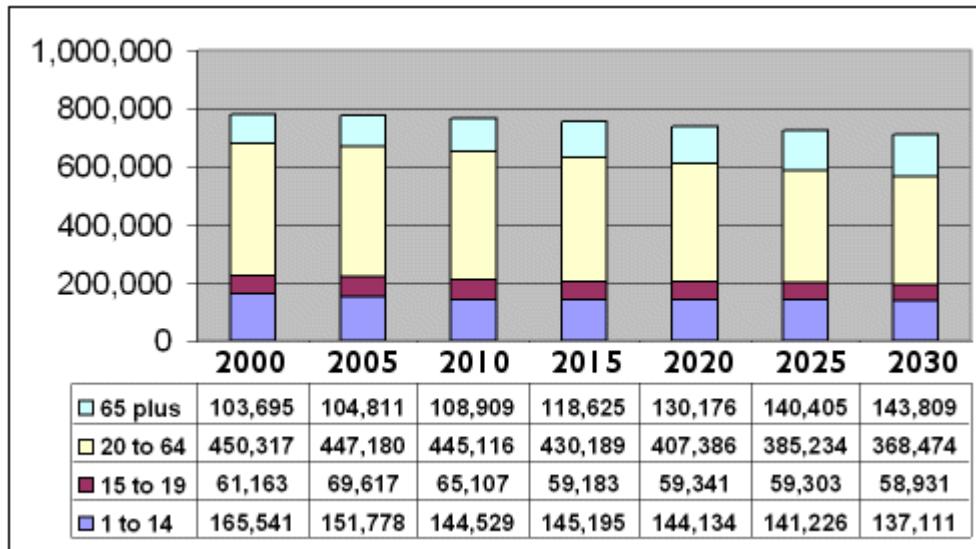
**Central New York Population Projections
(Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego counties)**



Source: Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research

For Central New York, the projections indicate a declining and aging population base throughout the projections period. The overall population is projected to decline 9.3 percent from 2000 to 2030. Even more importantly, the proportion of our population of prime working age will drop 6 percentage points over the period, with more people moving into the oldest age groups.

**Central New York Population Projections
(Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego counties)
By Age Group**



Source: Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research

This will profoundly affect the economy of Central New York. On the positive side, opportunities for our unemployed work force will soar as our available work force decreases. Conversely, Central New York employers will have a harder time finding enough workers to fuel the modest job growth (0.7 percent annually) projected for Central New York through 2014.

Several factors can mitigate the labor shortages created by our declining population. Immigration is widely acknowledged as a key to sustaining job growth in coming years. Lifting more Central New Yorkers out of poverty and into jobs each year can also strengthen our work force. In addition, increased public funding through the Economic Stimulus Plan for job training programs can produce a better match between the needs of local employers and the available work force.

The need to address these concerns is immediate. Employers who cannot grow jobs in Central New York may look elsewhere for future expansions. Firms that face a tight labor market in other parts of the U.S. will continue to seek new locations where workers are more plentiful. Without sufficient work force, Central New York may no longer be a desirable location for these companies.

FINDINGS

1. The aging population (65+) is increasing at a rate higher than the state as a whole and projections indicate a declining and aging population base in the years ahead.
2. Lifting more citizens out of poverty and into jobs each year can strengthen our work force.
3. Increased public funding through the Economic Stimulus Plan for job training programs can produce a better match between the needs of local employers and the available work force.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop strategies to effectively increase workplace and vocational literacy programs with an emphasis on numeracy education
2. Identify and secure public and private funding to support strategies that strengthen the workforce.



"If it takes a village to raise a child, our community cannot thrive until every child, women and man can be satisfied and confident in his or her ability to read, write, speak and compute."

Margaret S. Argentine, PhD., RN, CNE, Morrisville State College - SUNY

CONCLUSION

The National Commission on Adult Literacy's "The Fiscal Consequences of Adult Educational Attainment" (NCAL, 2007) reports: "Increased years of educational attainment and higher literacy/numeracy proficiencies strengthen labor market outcomes for U.S. adults, overall and across gender, age and race-ethnic groups. As a consequence of their higher rates of employment and annual earnings as well as their higher marriage rates, higher home ownership rates and lower rates of institutionalization, adults with more schooling generate more favorable fiscal impacts for federal, state and local governments. They pay substantially more income, payroll, sales and property taxes than their less educated peers and receive less income in the form of cash and in-kind transfers. The mean size of the net fiscal contributions of adults rises steadily and considerably with their level of formal schooling."

This Needs Assessment confirms what many in the community know: Low literacy is a critical issue for Madison County and must be addressed at a community-wide scale for there to be substantive change.

In the twenty-first century, individuals require more sophisticated skills than ever before to achieve personal and economic advancement, to meet the demands of more difficult and technical jobs, to navigate confusing health and financial systems, and to help their children gain the skills needed for success in an increasingly complex society. Because communities are composed of individuals, community success depends upon individual success, and therefore barriers to individual literacy must be viewed as a challenge for the whole community. A call to action by Madison County leaders will elevate the issue and pave the way for creative and effective solutions. A comprehensive literacy initiative can be a major investment, but it can also bring enormous dividends: A highly skilled workforce, a prosperous economy and new hope for the future of the entire community.

A coordinated effort by a broad array of stakeholders is necessary to address the needs identified in this report.

APPENDICES

1. PARTICIPANT LIST

1. Amy Barsha	Morrisville State College – SUNY
2. Barbara Coger	Hamilton Library
3. Barbara Howland	Town of Cazenovia
4. Betsy Kennedy	Cazenovia Library
5. Betty Ann Liddell	Liberty Resources
6. Brenda Hicks	Oneida Nation
7. Brian Nolan	Madison County resident
8. Carla Gualtieri	Madison Oneida BOCES
9. Carolyn Gerakopoulos	Oneida Public Library
10. Chris Harper	Madison Central School District
11. Christine Sears	Madison Cortland ARC
12. Chrystal Johnson	Madison County Department of Health
13. Cindy McCall	Cazenovia coordinator for Madison County Reads Ahead
14. David Buran	Hamilton coordinator for Madison County Reads Ahead
15. Deb Munn	Community Action Partnership of Madison County
16. Diana Norton	Mid-York Library System
17. Diana Wendell	Madison Oneida BOCES
18. Diane Belusar	Oneida Area Zonta Club
19. Diane Ryan	Community Action Partnership of Madison County
20. Elizabeth Crofut	Madison County Head Start
21. Ellen Percy Kraly	Upstate Institute at Colgate University
22. Eric Faisst	Madison County Health Department
23. Frank Ridzi	Central New York Community Foundation
24. Fred Bragon	Canastota Central School District
25. Gigi Redmond	CazCares
26. Glenn Osterhout	Madison Central School District
27. Grace Rapasadi	Assemblyman Magee's office
28. Hank Leo	YMCA
29. Heather Hawkins	Morrisville State College – SUNY
30. Jack Miller	Madison County Planning Department
31. James Matt	Mid-State Regional Area Educational Network
32. James Rafte	City of Oneida, Madison Board of Supervisors
33. Jan White	Canastota Central School District
34. Jennie Slover	Madison County resident
35. Joanne Dunkle	Cazenovia School District
36. John Becker	Town of Sullivan

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37. John Margo	Oneida Healthcare Center
38. John Reinhardt	City of Oneida
39. Judy Donnelly	Oneida Public Library – Project Read
40. Judy Pawlikowski	Madison Oneida BOCES
41. Julie Anne Dale	Community Action Partnership of Madison County
42. Karen Fauls-Traynor	Sullivan Free Library
43. Kathi Sochia	Oneida Nation
44. Kathleen Rinaldo	Madison Oneida BOCES
45. Kathy Donegan	Oneida Savings Bank
46. Kathy Stagnitti	Canastota coordinator for Madison County Reads Ahead
47. Kevin Ellis	Hamilton School District
48. Kirsten Treibel	YMCA
49. Kurt Wanfried	Oneida Dispatch
50. Larry Carpenter	Town of Canastota
51. Lewis Carinci	City of Oneida
52. Lisa Hoose	Madison County resident
53. Lisa Seitz	Madison Oneida BOCES
54. Liz Metzger	Canastota Library
55. Lorraine Schmidtka	Madison County Employment and Training
56. Margaret S. Argentine, PhD., RN, CNE	Morrisville State College
57. Maureen Dunn	Madison County Health Department
58. Maureen Nolan	Oneida City School District
59. Michael Drahos	Morrisville-Eaton Central School District
60. Michele Ryan	Oneida Public Library
61. Mickey Kopp	Town of Chittenango
62. Morris Atwood	Oneida Public Library - Madison County Reads Ahead
63. Nancy Miligy	Madison County resident
64. Nicholas Sbarra	MidYork Literacy Volunteers
65. Pam Heintz	Madison County Department of Social Services
66. Patricia Graham	Oneida Public Library – Standing Tall
67. Patricia Kaser	Chittenango School District
68. Patricia Mason	Madison Oneida BOCES
69. Patricia Vacca	Madison County resident
70. Patti Salisbury	City of Oneida
71. Peter Hedglon	Madison Oneida BOCES
72. Richard Mitchell	Madison County resident
73. Ruth Ready	Madison County resident
74. Sharon Liang	YMCA
75. Stephanie Manion	Madison County Department of Social Services
76. Steve Garneau	

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77. Susan Carr	Madison Oneida BOCES
78. Tammy Ablang	Mid-York Child Care Coordinating Council
79. Teresa Hudson	DeRuyter Central School District
80. Tom Murray	Oneida Public Library
81. Troy Waffner	Senator Valesky's office

2. LITERACY PROVIDER SURVEY

Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to complete the Madison County Reads Ahead Literacy Provider Survey. We salute you for the good work you are doing and thank you for taking the time to answer the following questions by January 16, 2009. The information collected from this survey will help literacy providers and community stakeholders make informed choices with current data about program resources, locations and types of service that are available in our community.

Please have the person most knowledgeable about literacy programs complete this survey. Please respond to each question completely. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer. When you have completed the survey, please click the “Submit” button at the bottom of the page.

1. * Provide your Organization's contact information. Please fill in completely.

Organization Name:

Executive Director Name:

Physical Address:

City/Town:

State:

Zip Code:

Phone:

Literacy Program Coordinator Position:

Literacy Program Coordinator Name:

2. Does the organization have 501(c)?

Yes

No

3. Please enter the web and e-mail addresses in the space below.

E-mail:

Website:

4. What types of literacy services does your organization offer? *Select all that apply.*

Early Childhood (Birth to 5 years old)

Pre-K

Homework Help

Subject Tutoring

Literacy Testing

Out-of-school Youth Literacy Programs

Learning Disability Assessment

Learning Disability Tutoring

Adult Basic Reading and Writing (ABE)

Basic Math

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Vocational English for Speakers of Other Languages (VESOL)
Native Language Literacy
Volunteer Tutoring
Literacy for Incarcerated Youth____, Adults____
GED Instruction/Test Preparation
GED Testing
On-Site Workplace Literacy
Citizenship
Parent Education
Family Literacy
Health Literacy
Financial Literacy
Computer Literacy
Other (please specify)

5. Approximately how many clients did your organization provide literacy services to in Fiscal Year 2007-08?

6. What percentage of your organization's literacy clients belong to the below age groups?
Percentages should total 100.

Early Childhood (less than 5 years)
 Childhood (5 years to 15 years)
 Youth (16 years to 20 years)
 Adult (21 years and older)

7. Does your organization provide literacy services at the physical address provided in Question 1, or at other locations?

On site only
On site and at other locations
Other locations only

8. If literacy services are provided at other locations, please list the locations where literacy services are provided.

**9. In your estimation, where did your organization's literacy service clients reside during Fiscal Year 2007-08? Indicate the approximate percentage of clients from each zip code.
Percentages should total 100.**

Bouckville 13310	Munnsville 13409
Brookfield 13314	New Woodstock 13122
Canastota 13032	North Brookfield 13418
Cazenovia 13035	Oneida 13421
Chittenango 13037	Perryville 13032
Clockville 13043	Peterboro 13134
DeRuyter 13052	Pratts Hollow 13134
Eaton 13334	Solsville 13465
Erieville 13061	Wampsville 13163
Georgetown 13072	West Eaton 13484
Hamilton 13346	West Edmeston 13485
Hubbardsville 13355	Onondaga County
Leonardsville 13364	Oneida County
Madison 13402	Don't know
Morrisville 13408	Other

10. What percentage of your staff involved in literacy initiatives is teacher certified?

11. *If your organization requires a pre-test for new clients to determine their baseline literacy levels prior to receiving services, please describe your pre-test procedure, including types of assessments used. If you do not pre-test clients, please enter "N/A."

12. If your agency measures or assesses clients' progress, briefly describe your procedures and the metrics or measurements you use.

13. Please describe the tracking system or database (e.g. ASISTS) that your agency uses to track clients' progress.
Yes No If yes, please describe

14. What do you see your agency's areas of greatest need? *Select all that apply.*

Volunteer Recruitment Fundraising Staff Retention
 Clientele Recruitment Public Relations Planning
 Staff Training / Development Record-Keeping
 Evaluation and Accountability Procedures

15. Please list any additional needs that are not listed above.

16. What is your organization's total Fiscal Year 2007-08 budget for literacy services?
\$ _____

17. Which of the following funding sources did your literacy services receive in Fiscal Year 2007-2008? Select all that apply.

- City
- County
- State Adult Education System
- State - Other
- Public School System
- Workforce Investment Board
- Department of Justice
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of Labor
- Federal - Other
- Foundations or Corporations (please list by name)
- Other (please specify)

18. In the spaces below, please enter the percentage of funding you received in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 from the following sources (for all literacy programs combined).

The total of all percentages must sum to 100%. Please try to be as accurate and thorough as possible.

<i>Program</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Local Government (e.g. Community Block Grant)	
Public Schools	
State Government	
Federal Government (e.g. Workforce Investment Act I or II)	
Foundations (e.g. community foundation, corporate, United Way)	
Individual Donors	
Events/Fundraising	
Other	
Don't Know	

19. Please enter the name of each organization you partner with (and, if applicable put in parentheses the name of any grants that jointly fund that collaborative effort). If you do not collaborate with any organizations, simply write N/A.

20. For your literacy programs, what are the biggest challenges you face regarding funding? Select all that apply.

- None - we don't have a problem getting resources
- Time and complexity of proposal development process
- Data collection and reporting requirements
- Staff time and resources to secure and monitor grants

Knowledge of potential literacy funding sources
Other (please specify)

21. What information about funding would be useful for your organization? *Select all that apply.*

- None
- New sources of funding for literacy
- Finding agencies willing to collaborate on literacy projects
- Accessing federal funds
- Accessing corporate funds
- How to write a grant
- How to prepare a project budget
- Other (please specify)

22. Please describe other challenges you face regarding funding.

23. What other information about funding would be useful for your organization?

Thank You!

Thank you so much for your time! Your time and input are greatly appreciated.

We will contact you within the next two months with the aggregate results of this survey.

3. GLOSSARY OF LITERACY TERMS

Adult Basic Education: Reading and Writing (ABE)

Programs that teach English-speaking adults and out-of-school youth how to read and write through classes, small groups, or individual tutoring and Distance Learning.

Basic Math/Numeracy

Programs that teach basic math skills in addition to reading and writing and workplace applications.

Children's Literacy

- Programs that provide direct instruction in beginning reading and writing skills to children.
- Early Childhood Education programs; Pre-K and Kindergarten
- Homework Assistance: Programs that help children or youth with their homework by providing instructors and/or study space. Reading Enrichment: Services that motivate children and youth to read.
- School-based Tutoring: Programs that teach children reading and writing skills at their public schools. Schools identify children to be served. Community and neighborhood programs and private, fee based organizations also offer tutoring

Citizenship Education

Programs that teach skills to those who do not speak English as their first language to prepare learners for U.S. citizenship.

Computer Instruction

Programs that offer instruction to develop computer skills for academic, personal, family, and work related purposes. CAI (Computer Aided Instruction)

Content Standards

The term used in a variety of fields to describe what individuals need to know and be able to do for a particular purpose.

Contextualized Instruction

Education that facilitates not only the acquisition of- but also the active application of knowledge, skills, and learning processes by embedding instruction in real world activities. Teaching and learning is situated in an authentic, real life context that has meaning for the student.

Distance Learning

Distance Learning (DL) is a type of educational process where the majority of the learning takes place with the teacher and student at different locations. In distance learning, teaching and learning are not conducted in a traditional classroom setting. Instruction may be computer based, on PBS or a combination of both. Instruction will be individually prescribed to students with the anticipation of educational gain and goal attainment.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Programs that teach reading, speaking, and writing in English as a second language to English Language Learners (ELL).

Family Literacy / Parent Education

- Programs that teach parents or guardians of young children how to improve their own reading and writing skills, and how to build early literacy skills in their children.
- Programs that teach literacy and parenting skills to parents or guardians of young children
- PAC Time - Parents and Children Reading Together

Financial Literacy

Programs that teach basic skills in managing personal finances: reading a paycheck, checking and saving accounts, personal money management. Some programs include home buyer education.

Functional Literacy

A level of reading and writing sufficient for everyday life but not for completely autonomous activity; the application of the skills and knowledge of reading and writing to adult or near-adult responsibilities in the workplace and required life skills.

GED General Education Development

Instructional programs that teach the skills needed to pass the GED exam; to complete the coursework for those who do not have a traditional high school diploma.

GED Test

Five separate tests given over several hours: math, language arts reading, science, social studies, and language arts writing. Programs providing GED Testing set requirements for taking the test and minimum grade level attainment on the TABE test. Test results are sent to the individual by the NYS Education Dept.

Health Literacy

Programs that teach the ability to access, understand, and use information that promotes and maintains health; including programs that teach nutrition, reading prescriptions,

safety; the oral language skills to talk to a doctor or medical professional about health issues

Incarcerated Education for Youth

For youth age 16-20 years old, the adult basic education, GED preparation, Learning Disability Assessment and tutoring provided in jails and sentenced county facilities.

Learning Disability

A serious difficulty with processing information, understanding and using spoken or written language, and/or reasoning and doing calculations in math. Programs provide a series of diagnostic assessments to determine the learner's strengths and areas where accommodations to instructions would be helpful.

Native Language Literacy (BENL - Basic Education in Native Language)

Programs that teach non-English speakers how to read and write in their native language and prepare them for English-language learning.

Performance-Based Assessment

A tool for measuring student learning that requires the student to construct or produce a response to an assessment item or task. Performance assessments attempt to emulate the context or conditions in which the intended knowledge or skills are actually applied. Examples might include on-demand writing tasks, projects resulting in a product, performance, or event, and portfolios involving a collection of student work related to multiple standards or themes.

Tutoring

- Programs that provide one on one instruction in reading, writing, math and other subjects.
- Homework Assistance: Programs that help children or youth with their homework by providing instructors and/or study space.
- Reading Enrichment: Services that motivate children and youth to read.
- School-based Tutoring: Programs that teach children reading and writing skills at their own public schools – schools identify children to be served.
- Adult Education: Programs that provide instruction to adults who score below the 5th grade level on the TABE test or who state that they are unable to read. Literacy Volunteers provides this type of educational programming.

Workplace Literacy

- Workplace Literacy: Basic literacy training in reading, writing, computer skills, and math offered for employees at the workplace (employers or organizations that teach workplace literacy skills at the sites where employees use those skills) or at adult literacy program sites.
- Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL): An approach towards teaching English as a Second Language centered on vocational/workplace specific needs.

- Career Center: Literacy organizations that provide adult learners with career training and job development.
- One Stop Center: A service of the WIB Workforce Investment Board locally, to assist job seekers with their employment and hiring goals, and employers in growing their businesses and meeting their hiring needs. In Oneida County it is CNY Works.

Work Readiness Credential

It provides a common, national standard for defining, assessing, and certifying that individuals can meet the demands of entry-level work and learn on the job. Examples include: Work Keys and Equipped for the Future.

4. NAAL LEVELS WITH LITERACY SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Level and definition	Key abilities associated with level	Sample tasks typical of level
BELOW BASIC indicates no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills.	Adults at the BELOW BASIC level range from being nonliterate in English to having the abilities listed below:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locating easily identifiable information in short, commonplace prose texts locating easily identifiable information and following written instructions in simple documents (e.g., charts or forms) locating numbers and using them to perform simple quantitative operations (primarily addition) when the mathematical information is very concrete and familiar searching a short, simple text to find out what a patient is allowed to drink before a medical test signing a form adding the amounts on a bank deposit slip
Score ranges for BELOW BASIC :	Prose: 0–209 Document: 0–204 Quantitative: 0–234	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reading and understanding information in short, commonplace prose texts reading and understanding information in simple documents locating easily identifiable quantitative information and using it to solve simple, one-step problems when the arithmetic operation is specified or easily inferred finding in a pamphlet for prospective jurors an explanation of how people were selected for the jury pool using a television guide to find out what programs are on at a specific time comparing the ticket prices for two events

INTERMEDIATE indicates skills necessary to perform moderately challenging literacy activities.

Score ranges for **INTERMEDIATE**:

Prose: 265–339

Document: 250–334

Quantitative: 290–349

- reading and understanding moderately dense, less commonplace prose texts as well as summarizing, making simple inferences, determining cause and effect, and recognizing the author's purpose
- locating information in dense, complex documents and making simple inferences about the information
- locating less familiar quantitative information and using it to solve problems when the arithmetic operation is not specified or easily inferred
- consulting reference materials to determine which foods contain a particular vitamin
- identifying a specific location on a map
- calculating the total cost of ordering specific office supplies from a catalog

PROFICIENT indicates skills necessary to perform more complex and challenging literacy activities.

Score ranges for **PROFICIENT**:

Prose: 340–500

Document: 335–500

Quantitative: 350–500

- reading lengthy, complex, abstract prose texts as well as synthesizing information and making complex inferences
- integrating, synthesizing, and analyzing multiple pieces of information located in complex documents
- locating more abstract quantitative information and using it to solve multistep problems when the arithmetic operations are not easily inferred and the problems are more complex
- comparing viewpoints in two editorials
- interpreting a table about blood pressure, age, and physical activity
- computing and comparing the cost per ounce of food items

NOTE: Although the literacy levels share common names with the NAEP levels, they do not correspond to the NAEP levels.

SOURCE: Hauser, R.M, Edley, C.F. Jr., Koenig, J.A., and Elliott, S.W. (Eds.). (2005). *Measuring Literacy: Performance Levels for Adults*, Interim Report. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; White, S. and Dillon, S. (2005). *Key Concepts and Features of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NCES 2006-471)*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

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