Adult Basic Education Program: 2006-07

Felix Edoghotu, Ph. D.  EA07-001-4

At-a-Glance

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program is a federal- and state-funded program designed to provide free educational opportunities to adults in Dallas and Rockwall counties. The ABE program provides classes for eligible adults allowing them the opportunity to acquire functional skills necessary to enhance the quality of their lives as workers, family members, and citizens. ABE funds were used to provide professional development, salaries, and other program-related services such as screening for instructional placement or academic performance prior to taking the GED examination. Working with Project Getting Results Educating Adults in Texas (GREAT) professional development was provided for teachers, teacher aids, substitute teachers, instructional coordinators, test administrators, community liaisons, and guests. As of August 17, 2007, there were 107 ABE sites in 12 cities in Dallas County (Dallas, Richardson, Carrolton, Irving, Garland, Grand Prairie, Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Lancaster, Pleasant Grove, Seagoville, and Mesquite) and 2 sites in Rockwall County (both sites in the city of Rockwall).

Demographics

A total of 8,298 adults participated in the program with the majority from Dallas County. Of these, 6,673 (80%) were Hispanics, 1,141 (14%) were African Americans, 316 (4%) were Whites, and 168 (2%) were Asian Americans, American Indians, and Pacific Islanders.

The majority of the students (5,510 or 66%) were females.

Two hundred twenty-one (221) teachers, 86 instructional coordinators, and 5 specialists were used to provide program services.

Of the teachers that participated in the program, 52% were Hispanics and 29% were African Americans while 48% of the coordinators were African Americans and 26% were Hispanics. Three of the five specialists were African Americans and two were Hispanics.

Budget

The program’s total budget for the 2006-2007 school year was $3,324,157. Of this amount, 83% was federal funds and 17% was state funds. Staff salaries, program-related training, instructional materials, and other operating and indirect costs accounted for the largest expenditure categories. Program evaluation accounted for .5% of the budgeted expenditures.

Program Outcomes

The students attended classes for a total of approximately 39,210 clock hours.

Of the total number of adults participating in the program, 238 (3%) passed the GED. Of these, 17 (7%) passed the GED after having attended classes for only 12 clock hours or less.

Conclusions

The program’s GED test results for this year have not been encouraging due to the low passing rate of 3% out of 8,298 students (mostly Hispanic students) who took part in the program.

Recommendations

- Since the program serves a predominant Hispanic population, program management should do the following to help increase the students’ GED passing rates.
  - Increase the number of clock hours students are taught English.
  - Hire more qualified full-time ESL teachers to reflect the 80% Hispanic student population in the program.
  - Students should be encouraged (e.g. provide incentives) to continue to attend classes until graduation.
  - Daycare services should be provided to children whose parents lack such services while in class.