Adult Basic Education Program: 2008-09

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At-A-Glance

The Adult Basic Education Program (ABE) was a federal and state funded program designed to provide free educational opportunities to adult learners and educationally disadvantaged adults in Dallas and Rockwall counties. The classes provided the opportunity to acquire functional skills necessary to enhance the quality of student’s lives as workers, family members and citizens.

Programs Offered

Basic Literacy concentrated on skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. English as a Second Language (ESL) offered both general and workplace focused language instruction. El Civics instruction introduced concepts needed to become productive community members and U.S. citizens. The GED program was for DALLAS ISD students who did not graduate high school, as well as parents and other family members. Community Liaisons led counseling sessions on parenting skills, substance abuse, supporting children’s school achievement, paving the road to college, and professional workforce skills.

These programs helped bridge the gap between DALLAS ISD schools and parents as they learned along with and supported their children in the same school building.

Characteristics of the Program

Various local agencies collaborated with ABE: Dallas Housing Authority, The United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (UWMD), AVANCE, Mexican Consulate, Catholic Charities and other churches, Texas Workforce Centers, Even Start, Community Colleges, school districts and Dallas Public Libraries. Members from these agencies sat on the ABE Community Advisory Board. GED, or General Educational Development, included five subjects for instruction: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Writing Skills and Reading. GED tests were available in English, Spanish, French, large-print, audiocassette and Braille.

The ABE Department employed effective, highly qualified, part-time personnel as instructional coordinators, teachers, community liaisons, substitute teachers, instructional aides and testers. Classes were held primarily in the evenings or on the weekend. Instructional Coordinators supervised classes to ensure that the teachers’ lesson plans and instructional strategies were in keeping with the program guidelines and procedures to meet local, state and federal requirements. Instructional Coordinators set up testing, continually updated student rosters, and met monthly with teachers to share data from progress testing.

Student Demographics

The ABE program welcomed all participants, including adults and students aged 18 or older, who were in need of the programs offered. Additionally, 17-year-olds were eligible to enroll if they had officially withdrawn from school, and had parental approval. High school seniors who had completed all classes and final exams, but had not passed the four TAKS tests were eligible for GED instruction. Adult Basic Education also held classes in two correctional facilities in the area.

Adult Basic Education enrolled 5,137 students, the majority of whom were between the ages of 25 and 44 (61%). Students aged 19-24 and 45-59 were equally represented at 15% each. Most ABE students were Hispanic (80.6%).

Assessment

Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) was used as a comprehensive performance accountability system. Using TEAMS, staff recorded and entered student, class, provider and staff development information, assessed the effectiveness of the program and developed a continuous improvement plan of adult education and literacy activities.

State-mandated adult literacy assessments were used to determine a participant’s beginning or baseline level and performance or progress. The Commissioner of Education mandated that the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) be used for initial placement and measuring progress of the six levels of ASE learning. The Basic English Skills Tests (BEST) was used to measure the six functioning levels of English as Second Language (ESL) students. The BEST Plus is a computerized version of the BEST test. Testing identifies scores in literacy and oral language. Teachers aim instruction towards the domain of
significance, or the student’s dominant area of need, either literacy or oral language.

**Achievement Outcomes**

Achievement outcome was measured upon the student’s departure from the program, or at the fortieth hour of instruction. Average attendance was 108 hours per student (Table 1). Students enrolled in ESL classes averaged the most hours (118), followed by Basic Literacy (93) and Adult Secondary Education (< 1). The uncompleted category includes those who did not test as making progress, or complete an instructional level before they left the program. Nearly half of Basic Literacy students completed one or more levels on the *Test of Adult Basic Education* progress test. A large portion (66%) of ESL students completed one or more levels of the program. A small number of students were in the Adult Secondary Education program, but over 40% completed one or more levels.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number Enrolled</th>
<th>Attendence Hours</th>
<th>Completed One Level Number</th>
<th>Uncompleted</th>
<th>Completed One+ Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Literacy</td>
<td>1,415</td>
<td>132,10</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>3,597</td>
<td>424,03</td>
<td>2,387</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Secondary Ed.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,137,556,181</td>
<td>3,124</td>
<td>2,013</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Numbers uncompleted are those who did not progress test or complete a level before they left the program.

**New Initiatives in Implementation**

A major goal for the 2008-09 year was program improvement. Professional development became a requirement for all ABE staff as a condition for employment, including ABE-sponsored training, to ensure a focus on the department’s initiatives in implementing uniform instructional strategy.

Teachers were required to implement the curriculum adopted by the ABE department to ensure instructional quality and coherence. Lesson plans and implementation training were provided for GED and El Civics. ESL teachers received training in the implementation of lesson guides, aligned with the Texas Content Standards and the Dallas ABE adopted textbooks in each content area.

Teachers and Instructional Coordinators teamed together to keep accurate enrollment data, attendance, and educational gain records to complete the TEA required Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) reports. Teachers, in conjunction with students, regularly updated Student Profile forms, kept in the students’ portfolios along with samples of work documenting mastery. Staff was awarded with stipends for accurate and timely data.

The program manager continued regular Advisory Board meetings with various ABE staff members and community partners to improve the program.

In future, additional efforts should be made to identify program participants who are the parents of Dallas ISD students so that their progress can be monitored. These data could be used in subsequent years to focus recruitment strategies and increase district parent participation, ultimately benefitting the students of Dallas ISD.

Additional information may be obtained by consulting the Adult Basic Education Executive Summary Report, EA09-196-3, which can be found at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/.