

Orientation and Intake Policy

Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program (AAP)

PY 2013-2014

Policy, Purpose and Rationale

Robbinsdale Area Schools Adult Academic Program (AAP) is committed to an orientation and intake process for each learner that includes:

- Establishing individual learner goals and expectations
- Identifying an appropriate program of instruction and schedule
- Identifying learners who have any core NRS goals of employment, retaining employment, GED/diploma or post-secondary education or training

AAP is committed to following the ABE Learner Eligibility Criteria in regard to enrollment.

Required Benchmarks for ABE Consortia

AAP is committed to continuing to meet or exceed the NRS target percentages for all levels. AAP screens learners at intake and throughout the year to set core goals following the guidance that core goals must be reasonably achievable within a program year.

Local Consortium Benchmarks

In PY 2014, AAP exceeded the state's NRS core outcome goals in all areas. Our overall level change was 57.9% and our overall program post-testing was 79.7%. Our goal is to continue to meet or exceed state targets for NRS outcomes in all areas in coming years.

Local Consortium Plan to Implement Orientation and Intake Policy

Orientation Process for Basic Skills Learners

All Basic Skills learners (GED prep, adult diploma, college prep, skills refresher) interested in joining the Adult Academic occur every Tuesday at 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. The AAP counselor conducts the AAP counselor. Program intake occurs in a separate appointment after the orientation so learners have a chance to evaluate the appropriateness of our program for their needs before they go through the intake process. Individual intake appointments allow AAP staff to give each learner personal attention with little/no waiting. We do this with the intention of creating a warm and welcoming first experience of our program for new learners.

The orientation consists of the following:

- Description of program services
- Review of program requirements (attendance/progress)
- Completion of intake forms
- Tour of the facility
- Video overview of the program with teacher and learner quotes

Following the tour, learners can make an appointment to register for the program. The vast majority of people (90+ percent) who attend the orientation make an appointment to register.

Orientation Folder (contents)

- Program brochure (See Document G.5.)
- Registration form including Tennessee (See Document G.2.)
- Permission slip and waiver form - district required (See Document G.4.)
- Learner conduct agreement (See Document G.3.)
- AAP Materials Fee envelope (See Document G.10.)

Orientation for ESL Learners

Due to the wide range of English listening/speaking skills of prospective ESL learners, there is no group orientation. Orientation for these learners is handled on an individual basis during the intake process that is described later in this document

Orientation for Adult Academic Disability Program (AADP) Learners

Because of the relatively small number of applicants for the Disability Program, the AADP Orientation and Intake Sequences are combined and offered once a month. However, Orientation/Intake may also be scheduled on an as-needed basis. Orientation is presented in a group format. It consists of a program overview, a review of program policies and the opportunity for learners to ask questions. The intake sequence is handled on an individual basis as described later in this document.

About half of AADP learners have legal guardians. In this case, the learner's guardian must be present throughout both the orientation and intake sequence to assist with data collection and ensure that the learner's best interests are represented.

Intake Sequence for Basic Skills Learners

Individual intake appointments are available in our program office five days a week at scheduled times. For the convenience of our learners, appointment times are available in the morning, afternoon, or early evening.

The day before a learner's intake appointment, he/she receives a reminder call from our office. Upon arriving for the appointment, learners are greeted by the office staff and their intake paperwork (filled out at the orientation) is located. The program counselor handles all Basic Skills learner intakes and uses the following process:

1. Determine eligibility

The intake form provides the information needed to flag a potential eligibility problem. An individual conversation at intake allows for the opportunity to clarify any issues and assures that we do not enroll ineligible individuals. On the AAP registration form, learners who acknowledge their learning challenges and/or have a diagnosed disability fill out the Supplemental Registration. (See Document G.6.) We use this form to learn more about the learner's needs and/or determine appropriateness of enrollment in AAP. Depending on the information gained, we may direct learners to other community programs more suited to their needs and goals; allow enrollment on a provisional, short-term basis, if the ability to make progress is questionable; or enroll them in AAP.

2. Intake procedures for new vs. returning learners

Returning learners are considered those who have previously attended during the current program year. If they have, they fill out a new intake form, meet with the counselor to discuss their goals and class schedule, and review program attendance and progress requirements. They also take an updated TABE assessment (Reading or Math) based on the information in their file.

New learners meet with the counselor to discuss their goals, their class schedule and to review program attendance and progress requirements. They take the TABE Reading Locator/Survey sequence unless they are coming to our program only for math help. In that case, learners take the TABE Math Locator/Survey sequence.

At the end of each intake appointment, each learner is given a program handbook summary, an attendance line card (with the program number to call to report an absence), and a reminder card with the date and time of his/her scheduled first day of class. (See samples in Document G.)

3. Data collection

Our intake form is completed by new learners at orientation or by returning learners at their intake appointment. It contains all required data for MARCS, as well as the Tennessee Warning. Personal intake appointments allow the counselor to clarify any data issues/questions with each learner. After intake, our Student Data and Assessment Specialist enters all required information into MARCS.

4. Assessment

Basic Skills learners entering the program are assessed to determine their current reading and math level. All learners entering Basic Skills take the TABE. They are first given a TABE Locator followed by the appropriate level of TABE Survey test. TABE guidelines govern all testing. Within the first week of class, teachers ask learners to produce a writing sample. The TABE reading score determines learner class placement unless a learner needs only math. Then a learner is placed with Basic Skills, and a math TABE Locator is given followed by the appropriate level of TABE Survey test. TABE guidelines govern all testing. Any learner wishing to complete an adult diploma must obtain a GLE of 6.0 or above on a TABE D Reading test, per state guidelines.

5. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The teacher completes the PEP form (Document H.1) on the first day of class in a private meeting with each new learner. The teacher and learner review the PEP form, which the learner completes to determine NRS goals as well as short-term and long-term academic and personal goals. The teacher then signs the form along with the learner and returns it to the learner's file for later review at scheduled conferences held multiple times during the school year.

6. Intake Conclusion

After intake, learners are placed into appropriate class levels according to their timed TABE reading score. They are generally scheduled to begin classes at the beginning of the week following their intake. Learners receive a start date reminder card, a learner handbook

summary, an attendance line card (with the program number to call to report an absence), and our office calls learners the day before their start date as another reminder.

A Note on Managed Enrollment for our Basic Skills Program

Up until the fall of 2013, AAP used a managed-enrollment format with our Basic Skills learners in an effort to follow state recommendations for increasing learner persistence and outcomes. We developed a very useful system to keep registered learners engaged in their academic efforts while they were waiting to enter our classes in one of our monthly managed-enrollment cycles. Our system was called “prep center,” and this system gave interested learners the opportunity to attend our program twice a week to do GED predictors, teacher-led reading, writing, and math modules, and enrolled in distance learning while they were waiting to enter our regular, Basic Skills classrooms. Prep center was particularly useful for keeping new learners engaged when we had long waiting lists for entry into our Basic Skills program.

However, in the fall of 2013, we suspended our managed-enrollment/prep-center format, because our Basic Skills intakes dropped to a point where we had significant capacity in our classrooms. We think the drop was caused, in part, by our 2013 move to a new location (district-required) that has a lower concentration of potential learners who fit our service profile. We decided to stop managed enrollment, as we had not seen any positive impact on learner persistence or progress during our three years of trying it, and classroom capacity was up. From a fiscal perspective, we were disappointed that we could no longer support managed enrollment but through significantly increased local marketing efforts, we hope to revitalize our learner levels to a point where we can return to managed enrollment as soon as possible.

Intake Sequence for ESL Learners

Individual intake appointments are available five days a week at scheduled times in our program office. For the convenience of our learners, appointment times are available in the morning, afternoon, or early evening.

The day before an ESL learner’s intake appointment, he/she receives a reminder call from our office. Upon arriving for the appointment, the office staff greets the learner and asks the learner to complete the following intake documents:

- Registration form including Tennessee (See Document G.2.)
- Learner conduct agreement (See Document G.3.)
- Permission slip and waiver form - district required (See Document G.4.)
- AAP Materials Fee envelope (See Document G.10.)

The program counselor and the lead ESL teacher share ESL intake appointments and follow this process:

1. Determine Eligibility

The intake form provides the information needed to flag a potential eligibility problem. An individual conversation at intake allows for the opportunity to clarify any issues and assures that we do not enroll ineligible individuals. On the AAP registration form, learners who

acknowledge their learning challenges and/or have a diagnosed disability will fill out the supplemental registration form. We use this form to learn more about the learner's needs and/or determine appropriateness of enrollment in AAP. Depending on the information gained, learners may be directed to other community programs more suited to their needs and goals; allowed enrollment on a provisional, short term basis, if the ability to make progress is questionable; or enrolled in AAP.

2. Intake Procedures for New vs. Returning ESL Learners

Returning learners are considered those who have previously attended during the current program year. If they have, they fill out a new intake form, meet with the counselor or ESL lead teacher to discuss their goals and their class schedule, and to review program attendance and progress requirements. They also take an updated CASAS reading assessment based on the information in their file.

New ESL learners fill out the required intake documents (see above). They meet with the counselor or ESL lead teacher to discuss their goals and their class schedule and to review program attendance and progress requirements. They take an ESL Reading Locator to determine which CASAS level reading test is appropriate. At the end of each ESL learner's intake appointment, he/she is given a learner handbook summary, an attendance line card (with the program number to call to report an absence), and a reminder card with the date and time of his/her scheduled first day of class.

While the registration of low-level ESL speakers can be challenging, we have two office staff who are fluent in our most frequently needed language, Spanish, as is our lead ESL teacher. Usually, non-speakers come with a relative who can aid us during the intake appointment. If they speak a language other than English or Spanish and a relative is not available, our school district has a list of interpreters who can provide assistance.

3. Data Collection

New and returning ESL learners complete our intake form at their intake appointment. It contains all required data for MARCS as well as the Tennessee Warning. Personal intake appointments allow staff to clarify any data issues/questions with each learner. After intake, our Student Data and Assessment Specialist enters all required information into MARCS.

4. Assessment

ESL learners entering the program are assessed at intake to determine their current reading level. All ESL learners take the CASAS Reading (Life and Work) test. They are first given a locator followed by the appropriate level of CASAS test. CASAS guidelines govern all testing. The CASAS reading score determines learner class level.

5. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The teacher completes the ESL PEP form (Document H.2) during the first week of class in a private meeting with each new learner. The teacher and learner review the PEP form, which the learner completes to determine NRS goals as well as short-term and long-term academic and personal goals. The teacher then signs the form along with the learner and returns it to the learner's file for later review at scheduled conferences held multiple times during the school year.

6. Intake Conclusion

After intake, learners are placed into appropriate class levels according to their timed CASAS reading score. They are generally scheduled to begin classes at the beginning of the week following their intake. Learners receive a start date reminder card, a learner handbook summary, an attendance line card (with the program number to call to report an absence), and our office calls learners the day before their start date as another reminder.

Intake Sequence for Family Literacy (FLT) Program Participants

All FLT participants are either in our Basic Skills or ESL program. Their intake sequence is identical to the program in which they participate (Basic Skills or ESL), however, they fill out additional paperwork for the FLT program at registration. In addition, their first day of class with their child includes an orientation with our FLT director about the specific requirements of that program.

Intake Sequence for Adult Academic Disability Program (AADP) Learners

After participating in the group orientation described previously in Document B, learners (and legal guardians) meet individually with an AADP teacher to complete the following intake documents. (See Document G for samples.)

- AADP Entry Requirements form (See Document G.18.)
- AAP Registration form (See Document G.2.)
- AADP Additional Information form: collects information specific to learner's disability (See Document G.16.)
- AADP Learner Conduct Agreement (See Document G.19.)
- AAP Personal Education Plan (See Document H.3.)
- AAP Photo Release form - district required (See Document G.20.)
- AAP Materials Fee envelope (See Document G.10.)
- AADP Additional Learning Opportunities Information sheet (See Document G.17.)

One or both of the AADP teachers conducts the intake sequence with each learner and follows this process:

1. Determine Eligibility

Review and sign the Entry Requirements for the Robbinsdale Adult Academic Disability Program form with the learner. Because of the AADP's very targeted scope of instruction, it is important that learners meet all entry requirements before program admittance.

2. Intake Form and Additional Information Form

Provides demographic, academic, and relevant medical information about the learner.

3. Intake Procedures for New vs. Returning AADP Learners

Returning learners are considered those who have previously attended during the current program year. If they have, they fill out a new intake form, meet with an AADP teacher to discuss their goals and class schedule and review program attendance and progress requirements. They also take an updated TABE reading assessment based on the information in their file.

New AADP learners fill out the required intake documents (as previously listed). They meet with an AADP teacher to discuss their goals and class schedule and to review program attendance and progress requirements. They take the TABE Reading Locator to determine which TABE level reading test should be given.

4. Data Collection

New and returning AADP learners complete our intake form at their appointment. It contains all required data for MARCS, as well as the Tennessee Warning. Personal intake appointments allow staff to clarify any data issues/questions with each learner. After intake, our Student Data and Assessment Specialist enters all required information into MARCS.

5. Assessment

AADP learners entering the program are assessed at intake to determine their current reading level. All AADP learners take the TABE Reading test. They are first given a locator followed by the appropriate level of TABE test. Testing is done according to TABE guidelines but may include special accommodations including extra time, breaks and working in a quiet setting.

6. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The PEP form is completed by the teacher during the intake process in a private meeting with each new learner. The teacher and learner review the PEP form, which the learner completes to determine NRS goals as well as short-term and long-term academic and personal goals. The teacher then signs the form along with the learner and returns it to the learner's file for later review at scheduled conferences held multiple times during the school year.

7. Intake Conclusion

After intake, learners are placed into appropriate class levels according to their TABE reading score. They are generally scheduled to begin classes at their earliest available date.