

Learner Attendance Policy

Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program (AAP)

PY 2013-2014

Policy Purpose

The Robbinsdale Area Schools Adult Academic Program (AAP) is committed to providing efficient and effective programming to the eligible ABE population within our service area. To meet this requirement, AAP is committed to implementing effective outreach programs and activities. Once learners enroll, we commit to engaging them in a program that is of sufficient intensity and duration for our learners to achieve their goals.

Local Consortium Plan

Evaluation of Current Trends

AAP's Program Director uses monthly data provided by MARCS as well as program-generated reports to analyze current trends in enrollment and attendance. Monthly data (by classroom) is compared to previous year data as enrollment and attendance is continuously tracked. In addition, enrollment data is also tracked by city because our primary service area covers all or part of seven suburban cities. Since our site moved location from New Hope to Golden Valley in January 2013, our enrollment and attendance has dropped significantly (around 20 percent), so we have been examining both current and historical data to provide a basis for understanding the needs in our communities and to evaluate opportunities to increase enrollment/attendance. Census data is also reviewed to help determine where our target audience lives, and this information helps inform targeted mailings we send out to promote our program.

Recruitment and Outreach Methods

AAP views all contact with learners, partners and the wider community as marketing efforts in that they help form positive impressions, which can lead to referrals or retention. AAP utilizes a variety of recruitment and outreach methods as seen below. See section 5.2 for a complete list and plan for our Marketing and Outreach efforts.

Marketing Efforts to Attract New Learners

- Robbinsdale Community Ed Brochure
- Posters at K-12 schools
- Flyers at local libraries
- AAP and GED videos: used on our website, Channel 12, Facebook
- Every Door Direct Mailings: targets specific zip codes near our school
- K-12 open houses: we set up our table-top display and hand out flyers
- Refer-a-friend program with current learners
- Flyers to our partners: HTC, HIRED, Workforce Center
- ELL Family Nights at district K-12 schools
- Visits to area businesses

Attendance Policy

Our program attendance requirement for all learners is 70% measured on a monthly basis. We advise all learners that they are responsible for attending on a regular basis and for getting to class on time. AAP also expects learners to communicate with their teachers or call our attendance line if they need to miss class. If a learner's attendance is inconsistent, below 50% for a given month, or if they are absent for up to two weeks without contacting their teacher, they will be dropped from the program. Learners between 50 percent and 70 percent are warned about the possibility of being dropped if their attendance doesn't improve in the next month. To return to school, learners must re-register and may need to take a new assessment test.

If a learner has poor attendance, program staff will attempt to contact learners to determine the reason for absence and to find out if the learner has plans to improve. Continuing poor attendance leads to staff dropping learners from class rosters.

Learner Attendance Contract

Basic Skills, AADP and ESL learners sign a document that refers to the program attendance requirement as well as other guidelines (see Document E). Intake staff advise Basic Skills and AADP learners of their responsibility for regular attendance at both orientation and intake. ESL intake staff advise learners at intake only, since we have no ESL orientation.

Retention Strategies at Registration

We believe that retention starts at intake, which is why we individually register each learner. Individual registration sessions allow our staff to discuss both program and learner expectations that will contribute to each learner's success as well as identify any potential barriers (work schedule, transportation, family issues, health issues, etc.). Every effort is made to be sure that learners are appropriately placed in a classroom where they can receive the level of attention they need to feel comfortable and to be successful. During registration session, learners receive a Learner Handbook Summary pamphlet; an Attendance Line/School Closing Information card; and a reminder card with their class start date (see samples in Document G). We also call every learner the day before his/her start date to confirm the start or re-schedule it if necessary.

Retention Strategies in the Classroom

On their first day, office staff personally escort every new learner to the classroom and introduces him/her to the teacher and any education assistant (EA) or volunteer who works in the classroom.

Within the first day, the teacher meets with the learner and discusses goals, learning preferences and background as well as classroom procedures and schedules. During the meeting, the teacher reminds the learner of the attendance policy and completes the Personal Education Plan (PEP) form that is signed by the learner.

Teachers and EAs review monthly attendance for all learners, and learners receive an Attendance Summary form that documents how their attendance is helping (or hurting) their progress towards their goals. The Attendance Summary form also serves as a warning/reminder to learners whose attendance is below program requirements. Learners with top attendance levels have their names included on an Excellent Attendance Certificates include the names of learners with top attendance levels, and AAP posts these certificates in the hallways for recognition.

In addition to individual meetings with learners (as needed), our program holds “school conferences” twice a year (spring/fall). Teachers hold conferences during a designated week, and learners sign up for short, private meetings with their teacher where they can review their goals, progress, test scores, etc. Modeled after K-12 school conferences, AAP conferences give interested learners a planned opportunity to discuss their progress with their teacher and raise any issues or concerns they might have. Conferences also give teachers an opportunity to highlight learner progress or discuss any issues that are impeding progress.

In our Basic Skills classroom, staff posts pictures of our GED and diploma graduates from the current year as a motivator to current learners with the hope that they will think, “If they did it, so can I!”

MDE-ABE Learner Progress Policy

Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program complies with the Minnesota Department of Education/Adult Basic Education Learner Progress Policy. AAP began implementation of the Learner Progress Policy on October 1, 2007, with a renewed emphasis of documentation as of February 2014.

Each AAP learner signs the Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program Expectation and Dismissal Form at registration. The form outlines program and learner expectations to promote learning success, communicate program requirements and review the dismissal policy. Learners who do not demonstrate continued level gains on TABE or CASAS tests do not fulfill the academic intent and purpose of ABE and can be dismissed from the program at the discretion of the Program Director. On the AAP registration form, learners who acknowledge their learning challenges and/or have a diagnosed disability will fill out the supplemental registration form (see document G). We use the form to learn more about the individual learner’s needs and/or determine appropriateness of enrollment in AAP. Depending on the information gained, AAP 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.

Non-progressing learners who have been in our program for two or fewer years with no level gain on TABE or CASAS tests are identified by each teacher based on a review of monthly level gain reports provided by the Student Data and Assessment Specialist. At a meeting called by the teacher, non-progressing learners will begin the implementation process of the Learner Progress Intervention Plan.

1. **Progress Action Plan** – A clear description of actions/activities to be set by the progress intervention team that will include the learner, teacher, Program Director and others, depending on circumstances. These actions/activities may include the following: a behavioral contract, attendance contract, instructional strategies, testing accommodations, consultation with PANDA and/or referral to social services or a medical professional. The Progress Action Plan will include signatures from the learner and the Progress Intervention Team members.
2. **Timelines** – For each action in the plan, a deadline for accomplishment will be established.
3. **Guideline** – Periodic follow-up will occur during the six-month progress plan.

4. **Performance** – Actions in the Intervention Plan will be written in quantifiable and/or measurable terms.
5. **Duration** – the complete Intervention Plan timeline will not extend beyond six months.

Options for Non-Progressing Learners after the initial six-month intervention plan

1. Learner exits AAP. If feasible, AAP refers the learner to a community program more appropriate to his/her needs.
2. Learner remains enrolled in AAP without counting contact hours. AAP may or may not charge a learner for services. Determination will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Reviewing Data with Consortium Partners and Stakeholders

Staff receive data on learner progress (by classroom) at monthly staff meetings, and all licensed staff at our single program site receive attendance report summaries. The Community Education director reviews attendance and progress data on a quarterly basis, and the Community Education Advisory Council sees it annually.

Update Agreements with Workforce Centers and Partners

Our Special Projects Coordinator is responsible for making sure all partner MOUs are updated as needed. One of her main responsibilities is to cultivate/coordinate partners and build referral networks.

Using the MIS Data to Monitor Learner Attendance and Retention

The Program Director uses MIS data to determine overall trends in learner enrollment, retention, attendance and progress towards learner and program goals. Testing data is shared with staff at monthly meetings and by individual classroom. Office staff provide instructors with weekly reports on attendance/retention data. The primary office staff who provide data to the Program Director and teaching staff are the Student Data and Assessment Specialist (SDAS) and the school counselor.

Policy Contact Information

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