Section One: Program Overview

Label A: Robbinsdale Area Schools Adult Academic Program Overview

Since 1972, the Adult Academic Program has been serving the Robbinsdale Area Schools District with English language classes and Basic Skills/GED classes. Over the years, we have added transitions programming, college preparatory classes (including collaboration with a local technical college), articulated-college-credit courses, citizenship classes and workforce training. We have a vibrant Family Literacy program and a special program of Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes for adults who have had a brain injury or a stroke (Adult Academic Disability Program). Our program is the fiscal agent for PANDA Disability specialists, which is a Supplemental Service Provider. We also have had three FastTRAC grants (two currently – one is in its fourth year) and an EL Civics grant: Elder Care Employment and Civics Education Program. Our program also offers an Adult Diploma program. We were honored to receive the Pegasus Award in 2006 for best large ABE program.

Location and Service Area

The Adult Academic Program is a “consortium” comprised of one school district. We are part of Robbinsdale Area Schools (District 281), which is a district comprised of all or part of seven cities in the northwest Twin Cities metro area: Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Golden Valley, New Hope, Robbinsdale and Plymouth. (See Section 1, Attachment 1 for a map of our area.) Our program has one main location in Golden Valley at the Sandburg Learning Center. The program location previous to 2013 was the Winnetka Learning Center in New Hope. We also have space at Hennepin Technical College in Brooklyn Park where we hold college preparation classes on Fridays. In the past, we have had off-site locations in area churches, apartment complexes and local elementary schools; however, those sites have been discontinued due to low enrollment.

Schedule

Our program offers classes both day and evening. During the school year, day classes run Monday – Friday from 9-2 pm, and evening classes are Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4:30-8:30. Transitions classes and other specialty classes such as Citizenship are usually held on Fridays and/or Saturdays days or Monday and/or Wednesday evenings. Summer classes go to a reduced schedule for approximately 6-8 weeks of the summer, with the exact schedule determined by funding that year. We have four levels of English and three levels of Basic Skills, and learners are in the same class all day (or evening) with the exception of some learners switching classes for a different math or STAR group for part of their day.
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Staffing

During the school year, we have a staff of 14 teachers. All of our teachers have teaching licenses except one who is teaching ESL with a Master’s Degree in ESL. Ten teachers are full time, three work part time and one has irregular hours and works for us for special projects only, such as workforce and FastTRAC grant classes. We have nine paraprofessionals (Education Assistants) who are all part-time. Office staff is comprised of seven individuals, four of whom are full time. We have approximately 50-60 volunteers assisting teachers in the classroom each year.

Our Learners

We serve approximately 1,200 learners annually with about 250 attending at any given time. In most years, our learners are split about evenly between Basic Skills/College Prep and ESL. Approximately 75% of our learners are immigrants, coming from over 60 different countries and speaking 50 different languages. The predominant ethnic groups are Mexican, Somali and Liberian. We also have a strong representation from other South American, African and Asian countries. About 30% are Spanish speakers. The move to Golden Valley somewhat shifted our ethnic divisions with fewer Liberians and more Russians attending class. Our move has also affected the number of learners attending with a 13% drop our first half year at Sandburg and another 18.5% drop in contact hours this current year. Please refer to Section 1, Attachment 2 for a demographic breakdown of our learners.