

WELLSPRING ADULT EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA GRANTING REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Wellspring Adult Learning Program, under the direction and supervision of its Wellspring Inc. Board of Trustees, is a non-profit “adult basic education program” located in the Town of Hull. The Wellspring program of studies follows the Adult Basic Education curriculum in accordance with state and federal law (Adult Education Act of 1966, Title III, P.L. 89-750, and acts amendatory thereof). The Wellspring program is financed through federal and state grants. Therefore, no funds of any kind are provided from the school district budget of the Hull Public Schools. Hull Public Schools staff may present Wellspring as a program option to at-risk students as an alternative program for earning a high school diploma.

Adult education services, including Adult Secondary Education (ASE), English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation, Civics Education, workplace preparation, and technology skills, are accessible to all persons who qualify without regard to race, color, national origin, age, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, homelessness or disability in compliance with federal and state law.

“Adult basic education program” means a program of one or more courses in general education subjects taught at the grade school or high school level for “eligible persons” under the supervision of Wellspring, Inc. teachers. “Eligible persons” means persons who

1. have attained the age of sixteen,
2. have not earned a high school diploma,
3. have not been recognized as having achieved an equivalent level of education (GED),
4. and, are not now regularly enrolled in a public or private school,

The Wellspring Adult Learning Program design and implementation process for its program is based on research and effective educational practice. The program of study has made a concerted effort to serve all learners effectively. This effort means the program has appropriate materials for all levels, has posted non-discriminatory policies as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), is physically accessible, does not impose “unreasonable” time limits, and provides appropriate accommodations.

The Wellspring Adult Learning Program of study requires that

1. each student spend a minimum of one academic semester in study at Wellspring,
2. each student maintain a 90% attendance rate throughout his/her matriculation at Wellspring,
3. each student maintain an academic record of 80% or better in all classes taken at Wellspring,
4. no student may graduate before his/her previous graduating class,
5. and, Wellspring Credit Recovery Program can be attended by Seniors who have a minimum of two courses to complete to current Hull High School graduation requirements.

Classes are required in Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, career exploration and computer literacy.

The Wellspring Program curriculum guides encompass both the statewide learning standards and educational practices. Each content area curriculum guide contains content topics, standards for student performance in alignment with state curriculum frameworks, supporting learning activities, instructional strategies and assessments. The Test of adult Basic Education (TABE) is used to identify a student’s grade level range and achievement of basic skills (reading, mathematics, and language), placement, growth, literacy level, prediction and prescription information. Standardized tests equivalent to the TABE are administered in science, social

studies and computer literacy. Students must achieve a minimum score of Grade 12 level of skill on these tests to determine competency and successful completion of studies.

Instructors emphasize from the first day of a learner's experience with the program, that adult education is an *education* program and participation in the program requires a measurable education or workforce preparation-related goals. The program has developed a consistent process that is used with each and every learner. This process includes the following step:

1. teachers/learners identify a reasonable goal(s),
2. teachers/learners work toward the goal(s),
3. teachers/learners measure progress toward the goal(s),
4. teachers/learners revise goal(s), methods and learning materials as necessary,
5. teachers/learners monitor progress toward revised goal(s).

When this process is followed with every learner, the program should have a record that confirms that the program is the appropriate placement for the learner.

If a learner is not making progress because of excessive absences, the program has a record of the learner's attendance, a record of the counseling session with the learner explaining/reviewing the necessity for consistent attendance and consistent effort in order for the learner to achieve his/her goal(s). With this documentation, it is not unreasonable to "disenroll" a learner because the learner obviously did not (could not or would not) meet the program's reasonable expectations leading to goal attainment.

In compliance with state and federal requirements for regular monitoring of funded ABE programs, a team of Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) monitors from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted an FY 2003 monitoring visit to the Wellspring Adult Learning Center. The team conducted a review of fiscal records, SMARTT data collection, student files, curriculum and instructional materials, human resource records, and other program management documentation during the visit. In addition, team members individually observed separate classes and conducted interviews with students to corroborate team observations and to gather a broader view of the Program from the students' perspectives. The executive summary of findings highlighted areas of strength in curriculum, instruction, assessment, program planning and evaluation. The executive summary of finding highlighted recommendations in the areas of budget development and financial record system, community outreach and student recruitment, TABE assessment training, facilities.

Subcommittee Recommendations

- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools may recognize Wellspring, Inc., as an independent program that is not affiliated with the Hull Public Schools, which provides adult basic education services to "eligible persons."
- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools may endorse the non-profit status of Wellspring, Inc. Accordingly; there would be no obligation on the part of the Hull Public Schools to provide local financial support for the Wellspring program, services or its personnel.
- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools may require that Wellspring instructional and administrative staff have appropriate educational backgrounds, with credentials and training in adult education, and hold or qualify for the Adult Basic Education Teachers' License issued by the Massachusetts Department of Education or other valid Massachusetts teaching license.
- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools may not assign any district instructional or administrative staff to Wellspring, Inc. nor acknowledge any affiliation between Hull Public School employee collective bargaining units and its agreements and Wellspring, Inc. employees.

- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools may approve the Wellspring Adult Basic Education curriculum and its program of study, which has been prescribed in accordance with state and federal guidelines, e.g., Title VI, IX, 504, special education.
- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools should require that the Wellspring curriculum be reviewed and revised by Wellspring teachers as necessary to be in alignment with the Massachusetts Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks.
- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools may require the annual review of the Wellspring program of studies and curriculum by the Superintendent or his/her designee of the Hull Public Schools to determine that the program continues to meet local and state standards.
- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools may annually in June, beginning in 2004, grant a Hull Secondary School diploma, bearing the seal of the Hull Public Schools, to those “eligible persons” who have satisfactorily completed the Wellspring Adult Learning program of study and have passed the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment system (MCAS) tests with competency determinations as identified by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Hull Secondary School diploma will certify that the student *“has satisfactorily completed the Wellspring Adult Learning Program Course of Study as prescribed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Adult Basic Education Curriculum and approved by the Hull Public School Committee and is therefore awarded this diploma.”* While Wellspring, Inc. shall maintain the official transcript of Wellspring Program graduates in accordance with state law; unofficial transcripts of former Hull High School students shall be forwarded to the Hull High School guidance office.
- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools must not issue Hull Secondary School diplomas to those “eligible persons” who may successfully complete Wellspring Adult Learning program requirements prior to their identified public/private school year of graduation.
- The School Committee of the Hull Public Schools will not issue retroactive Hull Secondary School diplomas. Diplomas will not be awarded to students who complete the High School Equivalency (HSE) program.

REF: School Committee of the Hull Public Schools – Adult Education High School Diploma Granting Subcommittee Report and Recommendations – SC voted to accept the report on February 23, 2004.

First reading: January 23, 2017

Second reading: February 7, 2017

Adoption: March 13, 2017

Proposed reconsideration: March 2022