

State Office Updates

State notices for ABE and GAE sent to the field

Federal grant request notices have been sent to currently funded adult education and literacy funded council programs. The federal requests are due in the state Adult Education office no later than January 6, 2011. A checklist of forms needed for each grant will be posted on the Adult Education website. Contact Priscilla Flowers or Cecilia Jarry for additional information or visit the website at <http://ace.arkansas.gov/adult.html>.

Arkansas National Guard GED Plus Program Presents Award

Janice Hanlon, Administrator for the Arkansas GED Program received an award of appreciation from the National Guard for outstanding commitment and service. Hanlon provides training and technical assistance for the examiners at GED Plus -- a federally supported program which tests thousands of recruits annually.



The Arkansas Department of Career Education funds the Adult Education Division. The Adult Education Division provides programs and services statewide.

Mother, Daughter Earn GED® Together at Adult Education Center

By Sherry F. Pruitt/Jonesboro Sun

JONESBORO — Amanda Millsap, 35, and her daughter, Hannah Millsap, 17, have a lot to be thankful for this holiday season.

Both have been attending classes at Valley View Adult Education Center, 2311 East Nettleton Ave., since Oct. 5 and since have earned the General Educational Development credential.

Hannah was enrolled in the Westside School District but found she had anxiety. Her chest would tighten up and her blood pressure would increase, she explained.

School professionals recommended she wrap up her studies at the center.

That's when Amanda came into the picture. "I didn't have my high school diploma," she said.

However, the elder Millsap thought if she went to the center with her daughter, it would help, and they could be study buddies.

"There are a lot less people," Hannah said. "There's a lot less stress."

Most of the work Hannah did was refresher courses, but her mother had a huge algebra hurdle she had to overcome.

Hannah said it was a huge help knowing her mother was in the building, and that lessened her anxiety.

"They kind of made it a contest of subjects," Valley View Adult Education Center Director Steve Clayton said.

Amanda has completed the work keys test, which is an assessment that most industries in the region require, she said. In the meantime she's been driving a tractor while working on a farm.

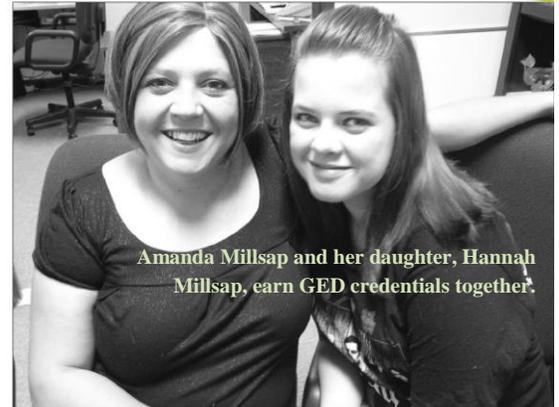
Looking to future

Hannah is a baby-sitter. She said she might attend on-campus university courses but would prefer to take online classes because of the anxiety.

Amanda said the accomplishment makes her feel great. And she was able to do it alone, take care of her children, Hannah, Miranda, an eighth-grader at the Walnut Ridge School District, and Rebecca, a 10th-grader at Westside.

"It was hard to push myself and to be the mom," Amanda said. "Hannah coming up here was really a blessing. If it wasn't for that, I don't think I would have got it done."

Hannah added, "I would have rather have graduated from high school, but I'm glad I just got it over with. I'm dealing with only half the problems I was dealing with."



Amanda Millsap and her daughter, Hannah Millsap, earn GED credentials together.

Amanda said the center has the best teachers. "There's not one here that doesn't just work their rear ends off to help us," Amanda said.

"They're dedicated," Hannah added.

Hannah said she wants eventually to work with children and perhaps major in social work or as a juvenile probation officer.

"Maybe I could get through to the kids," Hannah said.

She said she already has started preparing for the ACT exam in February.

"Both are great students, and it's been a pleasure to work with them," Clayton said.

Math instructor Darrell Collier said he worked with both Millsaps. "It was refreshing to see the closeness they share while going after the same goal. It's easy to see the daughter has a great respect for her mother. And the mother came basically to encourage her daughter," he said.

Amanda and Hannah plan to go through the graduation ceremony on May 9 at the Valley View Fine Arts Center.

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A message from Jefferson County Regional Adult Education Center bulletin board: "GED – The Gift That Keeps Giving"

Accommodations Requests

Individuals that desire to take the GED® Tests may be eligible to take the tests with reasonable accommodations. With sufficient documentation, accommodations may be provided in one of the following categories:

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Emotional/Mental Health Disability
- Learning and Other Cognitive Disabilities
- Physical/Chronic Health

Although some accommodations can be given individuals without approval from the state GED Testing Office such as earplugs or a straightedge, most accommodations require pre approval. Such accommodations may include extended time, a scribe, the audio version, calculator for both math sections, and supervised breaks.

In the year 2010, the state GED Testing Office has reviewed 174 requests which included:

ADHD	23 approved	6 disapproved
Emotional/Mental	15 approved	6 disapproved
Learning Disabilities	89 approved	23 disapproved
Physical/Chronic Health	10 approved	0 disapproved
Pending at GED Testing Service	2	

Keep in mind that each request requires specific information from a professional diagnostician documenting how the disability limits the candidate's current level of functioning and what relevant accommodations are needed.

You are encouraged to assist students in seeking accommodations if they qualify. If you have questions concerning accommodated GED testing, you may contact: Janice Hanlon at Janice.Hanlon@arkansas.gov or Patti White at prwhite@madisoncounty.net.

WAGE Instruction at Arkansas Department of Correction Ouachita River Unit, Malvern, Arkansas

The positive effects of inmates obtaining a GED® have been well documented by the Arkansas Department of Correction in studies performed by Bill Glover, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent of Arkansas Correctional School (ACS) and William "Dubs" Byers, Ed.D., Superintendent of ACS. They report that there is a "possible benefit of correctional education in crime prevention in terms of increasing the offenders' social cognitions, the ability to problem solve and a belief in their ability to control events in their lives." This increase in the ability to solve problems might "mitigate the harsh conditions of confinement and reduce prisonization, the negative attitudes that are sometimes associated with incarceration." The increased social cognition could translate into an enhanced possibility of successfully transitioning into society." (Glover and Byers, February, 2009 p. 3)

What has not yet been studied is the relationship between WAGE training and the ability to obtain and keep meaningful employment for those inmates who have been released from the Arkansas Department of Correction and have participated in the WAGE instruction classes at the Ouachita River Unit in Malvern, Arkansas. However, data is being collected through a partnership between Ouachita Technical College and Arkansas Department of Correction – Ouachita River Unit.

The partnership began in July 2008 when the Arkansas Department of Career Education provided a special grant to Ouachita Area Adult Education Center in Malvern to purchase laptop computers, PACE curriculum, and other assessment software for the establishment of a WAGE classroom at the Ouachita River Unit. During the two and one half years that the program has been in existence, the WAGE classroom has had 89 inmates enter the program. Of the 89 inmates only 24 inmates were dropped during the first month of their participation; most of these 24 inmates were dropped for disciplinary reasons and will not be included in the report and subsequently not considered in calculating the achievements of 65 remaining inmates.

The 65 inmates stayed an average of 3.8 months and during that time earned a total of 173 certificates. The certificates that the students earned were: Employability, Clerical and Industrial. Fifty (76.9%) inmates earned all three. Twelve (18.1%) of the inmates earned two certificates, and three (5%) students earned a certificate in one area. Efforts were hindered when the WAGE testing went on line. The Correctional administration does not generally approve of inmates having access the internet, however, IT department of the Arkansas Department of Correction was instrumental in helping the program get online for WAGE testing.

As we work through this model program, we have found that it is so important to select the right instructor for this program and I believe that I found one in Ms. Cris McKinney. WAGE is a program at the Arkansas Department of Correction that inmates strive to be in, so we will be interested to see how the community relates to the inmates with WAGE certificates.

--Submitted by Dr. Blake Robertson,
Vice President of Adult and Workforce Education at Ouachita Technical College

