

Executive Summary

Academy of Hope Public Charter School

The need for adult education services in the District of Columbia is great. Some estimates indicate that **36%** (nearly **170,000**) of District residents read at the lowest literacy level (below basic).¹ Even more alarming is that the dropout rate in Washington's high schools is 43% annually². Nearly 30% of adults in the city do not have a high school credential and even with a high school credential, many residents living in the city are ill prepared to enter the District's competitive workforce. The Academy of Hope Adult Career Public Charter School (AOH PCS) will provide educational and career training to low-income adults ages 18 and older with or without a high school diploma. Adults at AOH PCS will receive a rich education leading to a high school credential, employment, or college.

Based upon the highly successful adult education programs operated by Academy of Hope for over 23 years, and the Career Pathways Framework developed by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges, AOH PCS will create a seamless system between adult basic education, career training, and post-secondary preparation. All programs will be linked to academic credits, high school credentials, industry certifications, multiple entry-exit points, and living wage occupations. Programs and support services for adults enrolling in AOH PCS will include:

- Adult Basic Education Classes (reading, writing, math)
- GED Preparation Classes (reading, writing, math, science, social studies)
- External Diploma Program (based upon 65 competencies and students receive a high school diploma from DCPS)
- Basic Computer Skills Classes (skills for personal and school success)
- Workplace Literacy (Adult Basic Education provided at worksites)
- Workplace Academics (math and writing skills for the workplace and alignment of academics to apprenticeship entrance exams)
- College Readiness/Preparation (developing habits of mind for college success, writing, and math) – Aligned to the Accuplacer (placement test used by colleges to place entering freshmen in appropriate classes) and to developmental courses offered at area colleges and universities.
- Advanced Technology Skills Training (Information Technology and office skills training leading to industry certifications such as Internet and Computer Core Certification/ IC3 and Microsoft Office Specialist)
- College Credit for Select Postsecondary Classes – Offered through American Council on Education (ACE) accreditation, which we will pursue in year three of operations.

AOH PCS will offer two pathways to success:

Secondary Education Pathway to Success – Adults who take this pathway *do not* have high school credentials *or* lack the academic skills of a high school graduate. Courses will include:

¹ District of Columbia State Education Agency, 2007, *State of Adult Literacy Report*

² DC State Superintendent of Education 2006, *Double the Numbers for College Success*

1. Adult Basic Education (ABE): ABE classes develop basic skills in reading, writing, and math with an emphasis on acquiring skills needed for success in everyday life.
2. GED Preparation: For students with reading and math skills above the 8th grade level, GED Preparation classes address skills needed to pass all subject areas of the GED exam – math, science, writing, social studies, and reading.
3. Basic Computer Literacy: For success in the 21st Century, basic computer skills are necessary. As a result, all adult learners will have access to basic computer training including keyboarding, internet use, emailing and basic word processing.

The Secondary Education Pathway will provide adult learners the academic skills needed for successful postsecondary learning and provides the critical link to further education and occupational training. Adults may choose to exit Academy of Hope upon reaching their individual goals, which could range from improving academic skills for work or personal reasons to earning a high school credential, or they may choose to move onto *Postsecondary Education Pathway* courses.

Postsecondary Education Pathway to Success: – Adults who take this pathway have their high school credentials (diploma or GED) or are close to passing the GED.

1. Workforce Preparation – For adults with the goal of immediate entry into the workforce, apprenticeships, or job advancement (workplace academics, job readiness and technical training)
2. College Readiness – For adults with the goal of entering college for a certificate program, 2-year degree or 4-year degree (habits of mind for college, advance writing and math skills)

Key to the success of the college preparation program will be articulation agreements with area colleges and universities and our transition-to-college courses and seminars. According to the American Council on Education (2006), 75% of all GED recipients that enter college do not graduate. The college readiness pathway will help AOH graduates and other GED recipients to circumvent this fate.

AOH PCS will work with area colleges and universities to develop articulation agreements for college credit and to align our college courses with their developmental programs. We will also seek accreditation of select courses through the American Council of Education.

In addition to a rich education, students will have access to intensive academic assistance through our academic support center and comprehensive career assessment, guidance, case management, and support services. For career guidance services, Academy of Hope PCS will have access to a state of the art vocational evaluation and college resource center. AOH PCS will also continue to collaborate with the George Washington University's graduate program in vocational evaluation and career counseling.