

Vicksburg Adult Education Program

Introduction

With the retirement of Tonya Nash, the supervision of the Vicksburg Adult Education Program was passed to Rick Place, Director of Vicksburg Pathways High School. Over the last several months Rick, along with Superintendent Glaes and Gail VanDaff, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, have had discussions regarding the evaluation of this program and its viability in today's society. Below is a brief rundown of the program's history, as well as its current state and recommendation for the future.

History

- The Vicksburg Adult Education Program began in 1981-82 school year.
- Within the first five years of the program, 93 non-traditional students graduated with their high school diplomas!
- The Adult Ed program provided a benefit to the community, as well as a financial benefit to the district.
- In the 1980's and 90's a high school diploma opened doors for these non-traditional students to apply for jobs that they would otherwise not have been able to.

Present

- The recent past has shown a decrease in enrollment and graduates from the program. Over the last five years, Vicksburg Adult Ed has graduated only 23 students. Currently, there are only 5 students enrolled in the program.
- The reasons behind this downward trend are many.
 - The State of Michigan has been changing the requirements and funding for Adult Education Programs over the last 5 years.
 - The State seems to be moving away from the system of adults earning high school diplomas, and encouraging a system of skills training through the community colleges.
 - The funding model for Adult Education continues to change as well. Several years ago, the State stopped counting FTE's for students and even stopped funding the program through the Department of Education. The program is currently funded through the Workforce Development Agency's Department of Talent and Economic Development.

- Obtaining a High School Diploma, while still important, doesn't mean as much to a non-traditional student as it used to. Our Adult Ed students are already working and, in their minds, attending class doesn't prepare or qualify them from anything, it simply reduces the number of hours they can work.

Recommendation

Because of these facts and forecasting the future of Adult Education in the State of Michigan, it is the recommendation of the Director of Adult Education to the School Board that the Vicksburg Adult Education Program close at the end of the 2016-17 school year. The program will celebrate the graduation of 3 students, including its 300th graduate on May 24th. There are 2 students remaining in the program who have yet to graduate. The Director is working with Superintendent Glaes as well as the Adult Ed teachers to create a plan that will allow the teachers to continue working with those two students until they reach graduation.