



**Wharton County
Junior College**

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Marketing and Communications
911 Boling Highway
Wharton, Texas 77488

800.561.9252, ext. 6322
Office: 979.532.6322
Fax: 979.532.6493

CONVENIENT AND AFFORDABLE EDUCATION

WCJC's AEL program offers host of class locations for GED/ESL students at no cost

WHARTON, TEXAS – Obtaining a GED or learning more about the English language are both affordable and convenient thanks to Wharton County Junior College's Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program.

The program – which provides services for more than 1,200 students each year – offers both day and evening classes on various days and times throughout the college's service district to help accommodate students' busy schedules. The classes and instructional materials are entirely free of charge.

"Our goal is to help students improve their basic skills and enter post-secondary education or the workforce," said Tara Zekavat, Director of WCJC's AEL program.

The AEL program offers both GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in Austin, Colorado, Fort Bend, Matagorda, Waller and Wharton counties. Zekavat and three full-time staff – Maria Alvarado, Roweena Britton and Maria Guevara – oversee the program, while nearly 50 teachers and aides conduct the classes.

The program offers basic reading, writing and math instruction for students interested in preparing for the high school equivalency exam (GED) and ESL courses for students who wish to develop better speaking and writing skills.

Zekavat said many students move through the GED program quickly, while others take a bit longer to feel prepared for the exam.

Campus locations in ♦ Wharton ♦ Sugar Land ♦ Richmond ♦ Bay City ■ Extension Center in El Campo

“It depends on the students and their baseline functioning level of math, reading and writing,” she said. “Some are ready to take their GED test in two months after entering our program, but it may take six months to a year for other students.”

Students must attend an orientation session and then complete the program within one year. Anyone who needs longer than that must re-attend the orientation. A GED graduation ceremony is held each year in June.

Anyone age 19 or older can sign up for the AEL program. Younger students must meet certain qualifications as specified on the Adult Education and Literacy webpage on the college’s website: www.wcjc.edu

Classes are currently offered throughout the WCJC service area, including in Bay City, El Campo, Columbus, Bellville, Sealy, Richmond, Sugar Land, Stafford, Eagle Lake, Hempstead, Hockley, Brookshire, Waller, Palacios and Wharton.

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