



## SAMPLE MATERIAL

### Avanza Program & Spanish Language General Education Development (GED)

Sleepy Hollow High School, New York

**Topic:** Dropout Prevention

**Practice:** Learning Environment

This document describes the Avanza and Spanish Language General Education Development (GED) programs at Sleepy Hollow High School. The Avanza Program is a pilot alternative academic program designed to meet the needs of English as a Second Language (ESL) students in middle and high school. These students are at risk of failing or dropping out of school because of significant educational gaps due to limited or interrupted schooling. The purpose of the Avanza Program is to improve the academic skills of these students so they can receive a New York State Regents diploma or their GED.

Students in the Spanish Language GED program are students who have arrived in the United States after age 19 without a high school diploma, students who have struggled for years in the regular ESL program, or students who are over the age of 16 and are at risk of dropping out.

## **Avanza Program**

**Goals:** The **Avanza Program** (Pre-GED/ Pre-Regents) is a pilot alternative academic program designed to meet the needs of ESL students at both the middle and high school levels who are at risk of failing or of dropping out of school because of significant educational gaps due to interrupted or limited schooling.

The purpose of the **Avanza Program** is to improve the academic skills of these students so that they can eventually achieve a Regents or GED diploma. The curriculum will prepare them for re-entry into the ESL or the Spanish language GED program by providing them with an integrated set of courses in English as a Second Language, basic mathematics, native language arts, learning and study skills, and content subjects such as social studies and science. In addition, they will have the opportunity to explore electives such as music, art, or technology. Students will receive pass/fail grades in their classes.

**Student profile:** Students in this program demonstrate at least five of the following:

- have a history of interrupted or limited schooling
- are significantly older than their grade-level peers
- speak Spanish as their first language
- read and write only at the elementary level in Spanish
- have limited English proficiency
- perform below secondary level in mathematics
- show significant deficits in the foundation knowledge of content areas such as science and social studies

- have weak study skills and work habits which contribute to poor school performance

**Entrance criteria:** Students will be recommended for this program on the basis of a constellation of criteria, including:

- interrupted or limited formal education as revealed in the intake interview
- interrupted or limited formal education as indicated by school records or transcripts
- academic lags as determined by assessments by psychologists, counselors, and/or teachers
- performance significantly below grade level on intake testing:
  - *WRAT*-Wide Range Achievement Test: math
  - *TVIP*-Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test: receptive vocabulary in Spanish
  - *AGS Reading Level Indicator*: reading level
  - *NNAT*-Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test: nonverbal ability
- failure to make adequate yearly progress in English and/or math as measured by state and local assessments
- failing at least two classes, as indicated in report cards and/or progress reports
- department identification and recommendation

**Exit criteria:** Students will exit the program when they:

- demonstrate knowledge of native language literacy skills at the eighth grade level as measured by the *AGS Reading Level Indicator* or the *TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education)*
- demonstrate the ability to apply successfully a variety of study skills and strategies to optimize their learning in the ESL or GED program, as measured by teacher observation
- perform at an eighth grade level in mathematics as measured by the *WRAT* or *TABE*
- demonstrate basic knowledge of content areas such as science and social studies as measured by teacher assessments

**Rules and regulations:** Students will be held accountable for all of the rules and regulations of Sleepy Hollow Middle/High School as stated in the Student Handbook and in the Code of Conduct for the Public Schools of the Tarrytowns.

## **Parent letter**

Dear parents,

Your son/daughter has been recommended to participate in the **Avanza Program** at Sleepy Hollow Middle School/High School. This is an alternative program to help students develop academic skills in all subject areas. Students will study language arts in both English and Spanish, and develop math skills. They will also take courses in social studies, music, and physical education, with electives in technology or art.

When students complete this program, they will return to the regular ESL program or be recommended for the Spanish language GED program.

If you wish to discuss this recommendation further, please call your child's school counselor (Ms. Ocasio, the middle school counselor at 332-6277 or Ms. Andujar, the high school counselor at 332-6210) or Ms. St. Vincent, the head of the ESL Department at 332-6227.

Please sign below to give permission for your son/daughter to participate in the **Avanza Program**.

Sincerely,

Katherine St. Vincent

ESL Department Chairperson

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give permission for my son/daughter,  
\_\_\_\_\_, to enter the **Avanza Program** at Sleepy  
Hollow Middle/High School.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Sleepy Hollow Alternative High School

**Spanish Language GED:**

Student Profile: Spanish-speaking students who

1. arrive after the age of 19, with an education but no high school diploma
2. are over the age of 17 and who have struggled for several years within the regular ESL program
3. are at risk for dropping out of school and are over the age of 16

Program Design:

1. 12 ½ hours per week of GED Preparation including instruction in
  - a. Spanish language arts
  - b. Science
  - c. Mathematics
  - d. Social Studies
2. 5 hours per week of English language instruction
3. For the remainder of the day, students choose between
  - a. Additional secondary level courses at SHHS
  - b. Work study

The Spanish language GED examination is offered at regular intervals through the year at various sites in the region. Students must reserve a spot at a testing site well in advance of the testing date. They must take a qualifying examination before they can sit for the GED test. Once they pass a part of the GED, they do not have to repeat that section of the test again. In addition to passing all four parts of the Spanish GED, students must meet a minimum average to earn the diploma. If they pass an additional subtest in English, the diploma reads “GED” rather than “Spanish GED.”

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES:**

2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-present
2	3	3	7	6	6	6	1

Total number of graduates to date since initiation of program: 34  
Likely to receive news of graduation: 2

## Spanish Language GED Program

### THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

1. To prepare qualified students to obtain a General Education Diploma by passing the Spanish language GED examination (in mathematics, science, social studies and Spanish language arts and English proficiency)
2. To provide intensive English language instruction for English language learners
3. To explore career choices through the BOCES Occupational Education Program, work/study and in-class activities and discussions.

### Students in the Spanish-Language GED Program:

1. Are between the ages of 17 and 21 (16 year olds can be considered only if they have already dropped out of high school)
2. Have native fluency in Spanish
3. Are performing at or above the 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and/or math level as measured by the Test of Adult Basic Education. (Students who fall below 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels can be placed in the Pre-GED program, which will prepare them for admittance to the GED when they qualify through testing).
4. Have little or no chance of earning a New York State Regents diploma, due to age and/or lack of necessary course credits for graduation
5. Are not classified as having a learning disability
6. Demonstrate serious commitment to the goals of the program

### Selection Process:

1. Student is referred for consideration in the Spanish Language GED Program by a school counselor
2. Student completes an application for admission to the Spanish Language GED Program
3. Student is interviewed by a committee consisting of the GED Instructor, the ESL Chairperson, and the student's Counselor. An adult witness (parent, guardian or other adult of the candidate's choosing) must accompany the student.
4. Selected students and witnesses must sign the Spanish Language GED Program Contract.



### Rules and Regulations:

Students must abide by all of the rules and regulations as stated in the Sleepy Hollow High School/Middle School handbook, with the following amendments:

1. Students may not be absent from class/school for more than 20 days in the entire school year, and no more than five days in any marking period, regardless of the reason for the absence. After 20 absences in the year or five in a marking period, the student will be dismissed from the program.
2. No students will be admitted to class after 8:30 a.m. – under ANY circumstances. If a student arrives after that time, he/she must leave the campus. This will be recorded as an absence.
3. Students who need to meet with the counselor, nurse or other school personnel must first obtain a pass from the GED instructor.
4. Students must come prepared to work diligently every day. This means that they must bring sufficient and appropriate materials to complete all school tasks.

## Contract of Agreement

### Spanish Language GED Program Sleepy Hollow Alternative High School

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will be enrolled in the Spanish Language GED class at Sleepy Hollow High School as of \_\_\_\_\_. I have read and understand the goals, rules and regulations of the program and agree to abide by them. I further understand that my failure to comply with any of these regulations will result in my temporary suspension or permanent removal from the program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
ESL Chairperson Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
GED Instructor Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Counselor Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant Principal Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Date

**Spanish Language GED Program  
Sleepy Hollow Alternative High School**

**Application for Admission**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's work: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's work: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Days of work: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours: \_\_\_\_\_ Manager/Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Please write a paragraph explaining why you would like to be admitted to the GED program.

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Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Counselor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Application Received \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_