



## MID-SOUTH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**January 15, 2015**

### **MSCC's Adult Ed Program Extending Reach in Crittenden County**

Mid-South Community College's Adult Education program is operating learning centers in West Memphis, Marion, Earle, and cyberspace as it strives to meet the diverse needs of Crittenden County.

"We're trying to accommodate the needs of our students," said Donnylle Hampton, MSCC Adult Ed director. "We're really trying to offer as much support as we possibly can for the people of Crittenden County."

The base of operations continues in the Arkansas Workforce Center on MSCC's North Campus, but the Adult Education efforts are growing throughout the county.

"We've opened new centers in Earle and Dominion World in Marion," Hampton said. "We still offer classes at the Probation Office on Shoppingway, and we continue to work with 16- and 17-year-olds through our partnership with East Arkansas Youth Services."

"We also have day and night classes at MSCC, and we're working on a new distance learning class as well. That way, people who are working can pursue their GED® studies at home. All students are required to come in for assessment, and they are assigned a teacher who will support them. But the majority of their instruction will be online."

During a recent statewide information campaign, billboards, commercials, and other advertisements pointed out that high school dropouts who earn a GED can earn \$8,000 a year more than those without a diploma.

"A lot more employers are not even hiring people without a high school diploma or GED," Hampton pointed out. "It's getting harder and harder to find a position, and if you find one, you are limited in how far you can go."

“We even have some students who had become Certified Nursing Assistants several years ago who are having to come back to work on their GED. Employers who hired them are raising their standards, so some people are at risk of losing their jobs because a high school diploma or GED certificate is something they’re expected to have.”

In addition to helping area residents learn skills needed in the workplace, MSCC’s Adult Education program is equipping them for the leap to college. For the spring 2015 semester, 10 recent GED grads have enrolled in Mid-South classes. Another six students are taking diesel and phlebotomy classes through the Accelerating Opportunities program which allows students to enroll in tuition-free technical classes (machining, diesel technology, and medical sciences) while working on their GED.

The department also helps area residents with preparation for Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate testing. The CRC is a portable credential based on the WorkKeys® assessment that demonstrates to employers that an individual possesses the basic workplace skills required for 21st century jobs.

Even if a job seeker has a high school diploma, GED, or post-secondary degree, the Arkansas CRC further verifies that he can handle tasks such as reading instructions and directions, working with figures, and finding information, tasks common in today’s workplace.

“We’re encouraging all of our students to get their Career Readiness Certificates, but our ultimate goal is to enroll students into college after they earn a GED credential.”

“Our major goals are to prepare students for higher education or for the workforce. Getting a CRC allows an individual to show prospective employers that he or she possesses the basic skills they need. Certain levels of ability in communication, math, and information technology required in today’s workforce, and we can help people gain those skills and demonstrate their mastery of them.”

The department is also reaching out to area employers to participate more actively in the Adult Ed program.

“We’re getting more businesses involved in our advisory committee because they can tell us what they need,” Hampton said.

At the most recent meeting, Hampton sought input on the employers’ views of high school diplomas versus GEDs.

“Our advisory members looked at the test and said ‘Now we actually have an assessment that tells us what kinds of skills these students have.’ The people on our board also had the opportunity to review our objectives, and they had very positive views about GED completers.”

Hampton said employers expressed a high level of respect for students returning to the classroom to finish their high school equivalency.

“Having Advisory Committee members who are involved with the hiring process is really a win-win situation for us,” she said.

Hampton pointed out that all Adult Ed instruction is free to Arkansas residents. GED practice and official testing require a fee, but many students are eligible for financial assistance to lower or eliminate the cost.

Hampton said the need for adult education is great.

“Since starting to work in this area, I’ve been amazed at the number of people I’ve known and worked with who do not have a high school diploma,” she said.

“Crittenden County is really in need, and we’re trying to serve as many people possible.”

“We’re really trying to reach out and guide more students toward the opportunities through our Adult Education department.”

For additional information, call (870) 733-6871, email [knfisher@midsouthcc.edu](mailto:knfisher@midsouthcc.edu), or visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway in West Memphis. The Adult Ed department is located in the Arkansas Workforce Center on the College’s North Campus.