



## Central Office

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### 2016-2017 ABE Narrative – Minnesota Department of Corrections

#### Section Three: Staff and Professional Development

##### 3.1 Describe the process used to identify the PD objectives in the consortium PD plan.

As both Department of Corrections (DOC) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) employees, our education staff require professional development in both corrections (e.g. security, appropriate interactions with offenders) *and* education. Teachers require 125 hours of training to renew their licenses. In addition, the DOC requires each full time employee to accumulate a minimum of 40 training hours annually. DOC employees work year around, and provide programming opportunities for the offenders who are in the facility year around. So, DOC staff need to negotiate the balance between “prison” or security training with their educational PD needs.

Our Consortium’s process to identify objectives in the PD plan involves input from staff at all levels, then final identification made at the administrative level. Teachers and support staff, as well as administrators, completed the state-sponsored PD survey. The survey results were reviewed thoroughly by the administrative team and by the staff assigned to this section of the narrative. Education directors/site managers provide informal input, from their staff’s as well as their own perspective as a facility supervisor, regarding PD needs on a monthly basis in our management meetings. Also considered in the identification of PD objectives process are the DOC Master Academic Plan goals, a review of the NRS tables, and consideration of current trends and initiatives in the field of ABE. **(See Attachment 3B.2 for Master Academic Plan goals.)**

The process is holistic in that it considers both quantitative (e.g. NRS tables, State ABE report card) and qualitative (e.g. student feedback, instructor feedback). Objectives are considered and communicated utilizing the SMART model coupled



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with specific activities and resources that will support achievement. After objectives are identified, staff participate in appropriate PD activities. **See Attachment 3A: DOC Education PD Outline** for detail on DOC Education PD opportunities specific to employee classification.

Moving forward, an even more focused attempt will be made to use the PD survey results to identify trends in individual PD needs, as well as to identify primary obstacles and challenges to professional development. DOC education has developed a system for tracking all PD activities throughout the consortium. This tracking system will be used for identifying individual, facility/site and consortium trends in PD activities – as well as expenses associated with the activities.

### **3.2 Detail the amount and percent of total funding that the consortium sets aside or uses for professional development. Consortia can use recent years' data as examples for a typical year. Percentages and amounts should be for the entire consortium either collectively or individually by organization/site to include fiscal agent and sub-grantees.**

The annual amount spent on professional development for ABE-paid staff exceeds **\$300,000** as staff are provided both on-site and off-site training. In almost every case, training is attended during the regular work day and therefore participating staff receive salary/benefits while attending. The \$300,000 or more includes the salary/benefits paid to staff while participating in PD, in addition to cost of the PD itself, e.g. registration fees, mileage reimbursement. The amount spent on PD represents approximately **6%** of the annual state and federal ABE grant for the consortium. **See Attachment 3C: Example of Site PD Expenditures FY15 to get an idea of one facility/site's specific PD activities in FY15.**

### **3.3 Describe the process and criteria (e.g., licensure, education, credentials, experience, etc.) used in hiring decisions related to paid instructional staff.**



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### How do you ensure that school district instructional staff holds current K-12 licenses?

The state (and therefore the DOC's) hiring processes follow very specific and formal guidelines. Education works with our agency's Human Resources (HR) unit in all hiring transactions. We have an HR staffing representative dedicated to Education hires, which helps ensure we are getting candidates who meet minimum qualifications, including holding a current license.

Beyond licensure, "preferred" qualifications are considered at the time of each hire. The preferred qualifications are based on the particular need at the facility/site where the new employee will be located. We always seek the best candidate for the position, and do not disqualify anyone due to potential salary considerations, etc. Teachers in the DOC are members of the state's SRSEA collective bargaining group, and have a "steps and lanes" salary grid similar to K-12 public school teachers.

When choosing final candidates for interviews, posted "preferred" qualifications are used to consider who those finalists will be. Interviews are traditional, and include a demonstration of teaching a lesson. Interview committees for teachers typically are made up of 1-3 administrators (including the facility education director/site manager) and 1-2 instructional staff.

A synopsis of the hiring steps is as follows:

1. **Transaction Request Form (TRF)** submitted. The form must be routed up the chain of command (facility education director, facility finance director, Central Office manager and the associate commissioner) for signatures. Any approver along the way can stop the process.
  - a. **Criteria:** The minimum qualification for teaching positions is documentation of a bachelor's degree in education AND a current teaching license. For some of our ABE teaching positions, any K-12 or



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ABE license satisfies the minimum requirements. In some cases, a facility is in need of a specialized license (e.g. Special Education, Secondary Math) and will post the criteria accordingly.

2. **Internal Posting and Bidding Process** occurs, if appropriate. Management may choose to post internally only if it feels a well-qualified candidate can be secured internally.
3. **Posting the Vacancy on the State Employment Website.** Education jobs are also posted on the state employment website, EdPost and typically on others such as MASA. When posted on these external sites, management still considers internal candidates first.
4. **Hiring Manager Gains Access to the Online Applicant Resumes.**
5. **Ensure Referred Candidates are Minimally Qualified.** This includes, as mentioned above, checking to see the candidates have current licensure.
6. **Determine Interview Pool.**
7. **Completion and Collection of Background Forms for All Interviewees.**
8. **Develop Interview Questions/Rankings and Choose Interview Panel.**
9. **Schedule and Conduct Interviews.**
10. **Review Interview Results and Discuss Affirmative Action/Seniority Provisions.**
11. **Conduct Employment Checks and Criminal History Check.** These checks are done on the top candidate or top 2-3 candidates.
12. **Offender Association and Predatory Offender Registration Forms.** Top candidate(s) must disclose any associations they have with current offenders (inmates) and agree to have a background check to ensure they are not on a predatory offender list.
13. **Determine Appropriate Salary and Make Offer.**
14. **Schedule Physical Exam for Top Candidate.**



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**15. Send Letters to Interviewees Not Selected and Provide Human Resources with all Hiring Documents.**

**16. Follow “Employee’s First Day” Procedures and Enroll New Staff in DOC “Academy.”**

**3.3.1 How do you ensure that school district instructional staff holds current K-12 licenses?**

The DOC is designated as Minnesota Special School District 1100-60 for Special Education and Title funding, and School District 0103-80 for Adult Basic Education. Our consortium and individual correctional facility sites are not part of any independent school district.

As part of the hiring process (See numbers 1 and 5 above in the hiring process), hiring managers access potential instructional staff’s license information on MDE’s website.

Instructional staff must maintain current full education licenses, per the SRSEA bargaining unit agreement. The DOC has established and maintains its own relicensing committee, sanctioned by the Minnesota Department of Education. The committee, per MDE guidelines, uploads individual teacher clock hour renewal unit and relicensing data to the MDE relicensing database.

In addition, as part of the annual performance review process, education directors/site managers check the status of each instructor’s licensure.

**3.4 Describe the new staff orientation process and information included.**

All new DOC employees (including Education staff) attend a mandatory DOC agency pre-service “Academy” held in conjunction with facility-specific orientation sessions. At this academy staff receive instruction on state employee and DOC employee protocol, as well comprehensive training on topics connected to appropriate interactions with convicted felons. **See Attachment 3B: DOC New**



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### Employee Orientation Checklist.

Every new ABE teacher participates in ABE New Teacher Orientation at Summer Institute. Within our Education unit, new staff members undergo one-on-one orientation with their education director/site manager and are assigned a mentor/coach. They are provided an overview of DOC education programming and provided with a copy of the Master Academic Plan. They are introduced to the DOC's internal database (COMS) and exposed to the MARCS database system as well as other data entry, facility information, and class schedule procedures. Education department processes and procedures are also introduced. New staff at some facilities have access to a "Go To" manual. **See Attachment 3B.1: DOC Sample "Go To" Manual.**

### 3.5 How does the consortium develop and revise individual staff professional development plans?

Individual staff professional development plans are developed using SMART professional development goals and are typically developed around the time of the employee's annual review. As with the consortium's annual goals, employee PD plans are informed by the Master Academic Plan, the employee's responses to the PD survey, the consortium's goals and initiatives, and also by the employee's particular responsibilities. Their plan encourages reflection on how their goals and PD will impact learners and contribute to the DOC's mission. **See attachments K, L, and M for PD Plan examples from three position classifications.**

### 3.6 Please list professional development opportunities that are promoted and/or supported by the consortium in some way. Estimate numbers or percentages of staff that participate in each activity in a typical year.

#### 3.6.1 Local or consortium-developed ABE-focused activities

- a. ACES and TIF professional learning communities (65%)
- b. ABE and MARCS data systems training sessions (40%)



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- c. Annual CEA (Correctional Education Association) conferences (90%)
- d. DOC adult diploma team workshops (10%)
- e. ABE Summer Institute (50%)

**See Attachment 3A for a comprehensive list of annual PD opportunities offered to DOC education staff.**

### **3.6.2 Broader education-focused local (school districts') DOC professional development**

- a. Midwest Care & Treatment Conference (10%)
- b. DOC mandated training such as: PREA, Sexual Harassment, Code of Conduct, Diversity Training, Right to Know, Safety, Fire Safety & Evacuation (95%)

### **3.6.3 ABE focused professional development provided by the Minnesota Department of Education and supplemental services, such as ATLAS regional events or Literacy Action Network's Summer Institute**

- a. ABE Grant Application Workshop (5%)
- b. MARCS Data Systems training (10%)
- c. TABE/CASAS, PearsonVue/GED Certification (15%)
- d. ABE Regional Workshops (15%)
- e. Summer Institute (50%)
- f. Language and Literacy Institute (10%)
- g. ABE Support Services Conference (5%)
- h. MN Adult Diploma Work Groups at MDE (5%)
- i. CCRS Training (5%)
- j. STAR, EBRI, MNI (5%)

### **3.6.4 Online professional development opportunities**

- a. MLC online courses in ESL and literacy (5%)
- b. Pro Literacy Courses (5%)
- c. DOC online courses (90%)
- d. Personal digital literacy training such as SMARTBoard, MicroSoft Outlook, Email Etiquette (10%)

### **3.6.5 Other professional development**

- a. MinneTESOL Conference (3%)

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- b. National College Transitions Network Conference (2%)
- c. COABE Conference (2%)
- d. Career-Focused Contextualized Basic Skills Instruction (LaGuardia) (5%)
- e. Education Minnesota Conference (50%)

### **3.6.6 Which professional development activities are mandatory and which are optional for ABE staff?**

Mandatory training sessions are consortium-sponsored activities and include trainings such as MARCS Data Systems, Adult Diploma Program, ACES PLC, and Special Education. Facilities also offer site-level mandatory training, during “prep” times or during security-driven facility lock downs. Historically, we have been fortunate in being able to suspend facility programming and send a large number of staff to conferences such as ABE Summer Institute and the state CEA conference. While these are not mandatory, historically we have sent large percentages of ABE staff to these events.

Attendance at the Education MN annual conference is secured in the teacher’s bargaining agreement. It is considered a work day and teachers get their full salary while attending. Optional professional development opportunities include conferences and professional development that is what we call “employee initiated” and relevant to that staff person’s assignment such as EBRI, MNI, Career-Focused Basic Skills Contextualized Instruction (La Guardia), Language & Literacy Institute, and MinneTESOL.

### **3.6.7 How does the consortium decide which opportunities to make mandatory?**

Consortium-sponsored opportunities that are determined to be critical to the employee’s position description and responsibilities are typically considered mandatory. There is also an annual list of “DOC” non-education training that the



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agency considers mandatory. Consortium-sponsored activities will reach the greatest amount of staff and will be within contract.

### **3.6.8 How does the consortium promote professional development opportunities to staff?**

Because student learning and achievement, including earning education credentials, is the mission for DOC Education staff, as studies show that educational achievement leads to a reduction in recidivism and higher chances of success upon release, professional development opportunities are encouraged in an effort to provide staff with the opportunity to gain increased skills and strategies that lead to the outcomes of learner persistence and achievement.

The consortium places an emphasis on employee retention and believes that our greatest resource is our staff. Developing staff talent and professionalism results in greater satisfaction, less staff discipline and a consistently high level of instruction. Opportunities are promoted by DOC Central Office Education administration via announcements at the monthly managers' meeting, communication to facility education directors/site managers via email, and, on occasion, via the Education Unit's "iShare" site.

When trainings or conferences become available, often the education director/site manager is expected to provide a list of interested and/or targeted staff for the opportunity. Staff also learn about ABE professional development opportunities through ABE Connect, by accessing the ATLAS website, LAN membership newsletters/announcements, and MDE/ABE announcements.

All permanent DOC education employees who work at least half time have a professional development plan.

### **3.7 What professional development challenges is the consortium experiencing?**



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### **How are these challenges being addressed?**

Based on results from the PD Survey 2016 the following challenges were identified:

- Pressure of time. We work in a prison where felons are incarcerated. When staff, including teaching staff, are away from the site, it can mean idle time for the inmates. Idle time for inmates is considered dangerous. So, there sometimes are concerns from facility security and management staff regarding educators participating in professional development that affects facility operations, and education staff feel that pressure at times. Staff also expresses concerns surrounding the build-up of work load when attending professional development opportunities.
- Facilities are spread out around the state, and it is often difficult to find PD opportunities that are geographically practical to attend.
- Support staff expressed interest in including them more often in training so that teachers and support staff feel mutually valued and more united.
- There is always a difficult balance between desired training and the need to be fiscally responsible with scarce funds. State budget constraints sometimes make it difficult to ensure staff are able to attend valuable trainings.
- Staff turnover requires a constant need to devote resources to training and re-training.

These challenges are trying to be addressed by the DOC Education management/supervisor team. Increasingly, each training opportunity is scrutinized in terms of cost/benefit. The good news is that the DOC and, specifically, the DOC Education Administration are committed to bringing and maintaining best practices in the workplace. When high quality PD opportunities



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that offer best practice instruction become available, every effort is made to ensure appropriate DOC staff are afforded the opportunity to attend.

**Documents** – Provide the following documentation:

- J** Professional development plan for the consortium that outlines the consortium's priorities and goals for professional development

Provide a complete professional development plan (complete with goals for professional development, rationale, activities, and evaluation measures) for a staff member in each of the following roles: Attachment 3J

- K** **Administrative staff**  
**L** **Support staff**  
**M** **Instructional staff**