**Section Three: Professional Development**

**Narrative Questions**

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

Professional development needs are determined at the local and at the consortium level. Local partners identify needs of their staff and opportunities for training available to them. These needs are shared with the governing board of the consortium. If several partner districts identify similar needs group activities are sought for the entire consortium. If need is specific to the local level then local options are explored. In addition a survey is conducted with every staff member in the consortium to seek input and personal needs for professional development. An annual consortium meeting is held each year that provides training in one or more PD areas as well as best practice sharing.

***3.2 Detail the amount and percent of total funding that the consortium sets aside or uses for professional development. Consortia can use recent year's’ 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 consortium spends approximately 15% each year of the total budget on professional development. This money is spent primarily by each partner site location for local, state and Minnesota Literacy council trainings as well as workshops and conferences that build staff competencies in ABE. Full consortium trainings and staff meetings are scheduled each year and available for all consortium staff to attend.

***3.3 Describe the process and criteria (e.g., licensure, education, credentials, experience, etc.) used in hiring decisions related to paid instructional staff. How do you ensure that school district instructional staff holds current K-12 licenses?***

Staffing is the responsibility of the local partner districts. All partners sign an operating agreement that assures that they will comply with state and federal requirements like licensing and credentials. The governing board also discusses staffing within partner districts to assure that they are in compliance.

**3.3.1** Upon application all candidates who apply to positions are required to have a MN Teaching licence and are asked to submit their valid instructional license to the hiring district. Teachers are responsible for knowledge of licensure renewal requirements, submitting CEU’s to their local district and renewing teaching licenses as scheduled.

3***.4 Describe the new staff orientation process and information included.***

New ABE staff receives orientation in a wide variety of ways. Every staff member is included in new staff trainings available in partner districts. ABE staff also receive curriculum training, data management instruction, program software training, overview of MN ABE standards and policies and procedures pertinent to the ABE program and students they will serve. Ongoing training and informal mentorship occurs within the individual partner district teams and at local and consortium staff meetings.

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

The consortium priority is to be responsive to data, use best practice, maintain collaborative dialog between partners, provide a highly skilled staff and maximize student achievement. Data is the primary driver for instruction and professional development goals. Data is reviewed on a regular basis by consortium directors and staff. In addition to data, state initiatives and directives are used to identify development needs for staff. Recent examples of these include distance learning, transition programming, career pathways and FastTRAC. Local district initiatives are used within partner sites for additional professional development training.

***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. Opportunities noted should include:***

1. ***Local or consortium-developed ABE-focused activities;***
2. ***Broader education-focused local school districts’ professional development;***
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;***
4. ***Online professional development opportunities; and***
5. ***Other professional development.***

***Please note:***

1. ***Which professional development activities are mandatory and which are optional for ABE staff?***
2. ***How does the consortium decide which opportunities to make mandatory?***
3. ***How does the consortium promote professional development opportunities to staff?***

SE ABE consortium provides members with opportunities to share best practices, consortium data and other current ABE information. Staff are encouraged to attend as much training as they are able and desire. Staff are required to attend local staff meetings, orientation, district staff development in alignment with local district requirements and digital literacy. Approximately 90% of all consortium staff take advantage of training opportunities and attend PD annually. One annual meeting is planned each year for consortium teaching staff to gather. ABE coordinators and administration from the member sites meet quarterly to share information and discuss student achievement and consortium initiatives. In addition to consortium meetings, all ABE staff is encouraged to attend local, regional and state trainings as they become available such as the Summer Institute, Minnesota Literacy council trainings, ATLAS trainings and online workshops. Governing board meetings provide additional training opportunities for Coordinators and Directors. The governing board meets at least quarterly during the year.

Staff participation in MDE, regional and supplemental trainings is high. Staff values the opportunity to learn, network and build team within the ABE community. These are important learning opportunities for ABE staff and budget is secured early to assure attendance at these trainings. At least one member from the consortium attends all training activities provided and shares this information with all members through formal (reports and staff meetings) and informal (conversation and staff sharing) with all members of the consortium.

ABE staff participates in online professional development activities that are offered locally, regionally, statewide and through organizations like the Literacy Action Network to meet the needs of the ABE program. Examples of this include distance learning, technology training, I-Pathways, ELL PLC’s, Community Interpreter, Immigration and Refugee Trauma, Parameters of Ethical Decision Making, Consortium Trainings, MABE training, state and regional trainings, TABE/CASAS Certifications, SE Transitions, Multilevel EL Instruction, MN Numeracy Initiative, Algebraic Reasoning, ACES study circles, Summer Institute, and many activities offered through MDE Supplemental Services. Five staff from SE ABE attended National College Transitions Network this fall in Rhode Island.

Mandatory trainings are determined at the site level and are in line with local district guidelines and procedures. Local district professional development activities expected of all district teaching staff is also expected for ABE teaching staff. Examples of this training includes diversity, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and policy and procedure training like Bullying, Harassment, Violence and specific workforce initiatives. Staff and administration identify optional activities based on individual staff needs, interests and staff assignments. The consortium does not have any training at the regional level that is mandatory. It is strongly suggested that all staff receive MABE training and resources are allocated to assist with making that easy to receive. Consortium resources are also allocated to local districts to assist with the costs associated with training.

Professional development needs are discussed at the governing board. Staff surveys have also been used to get input from staff regarding areas of need. Training sessions at the annual meeting are scheduled to address some of the areas of need identified by staff and the governing board. The consortium promotes PD opportunities through local partner districts via staff meetings, emails, flyers and provides compensation for attending to alleviate barriers.

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

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

Time, distance and money are the largest challenges faced by our consortium. SE ABE is a growing consortium and has consistently reached the cap for the past few years. Resources are needed to maintain programming and staff levels to serve the student needs, putting a strain on other expenditures.

Partnerships and distance learning are a few ways in which training is offered at a low cost. In other programs shared trainings have been successful and we hope to explore that opportunity within the ABE programs. Other cost savings include sending consortium representatives to training with expectations of sharing information consortium wide upon return. As state and local budgets continue to be challenged more creative ways to maintain staff development will need to be explored and implemented. Some ideas being considered is consortium web training using Skype, Interactive TV or other technology.