

## Section Three: Staff and Professional Development

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

The Director and AAP's Professional Development Committee familiarize themselves with district, state and national areas of focus/emphasis. Overall goals for the program are based upon these goals/trends as well as program needs determined through staff and learner surveys and data analysis.

In particular, AAP periodically conducts surveys of staff to determine staff objectives and goals in the area of Professional Development. This year, we were about to send out our survey when we heard about the PD survey being conducted by ATLAS and how they would share program-level responses. As such, we only needed to supplement the ATLAS survey with some additional questions, which were not covered in that survey.

The Director and the PD committee collect and take into consideration all the aforementioned information as objectives are set for the year.

### **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.**

AAP dedicates 1% of total funding to cover the cost of Professional Development for our program/consortium. In recent years, this has been around \$13,000-\$14,000 but is anticipated to be lower next year with an 18.5% reduction of contact hours this year due primarily to our program's recent relocation.

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

AAP hires all paid instructional staff members using the licensure/degree requirements of both Minnesota Adult Basic Education and Robbinsdale Area Schools. All of our teachers have current K-12 licenses, other than one ESL teacher who has a Master's Degree in English. All teachers in our Basic Skills lab (GED/Adult Diploma) have specific secondary licensure in one of the required subjects: language arts, social studies, science, and math.

Each position has a written detailed job description and any job postings and job interview questions are geared to these job requirements. We also look for as much relevant experience as possible. The Program Director and two or more teachers in related positions comprise the interview teams.

Teacher candidates are also required to submit a sample lesson plan prior to the interview and walk the interview team through the lesson. The Program Director has the final decision but relies heavily

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on the ratings and comments of the interview team. Each person being considered must have a background check and three reference checks done prior to hire.

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

The Human Resource department of district 281 asks for proof of licensure on the application form and checks the information prior to any hire. In addition, the HR department informs the instructor and the Director prior to the time when the license must be renewed and once renewal has been completed.

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

Prior to a new staff person's first day, a team meets to plan his/her orientation. Whatever instructional and/or office staff the new hire would be working with most closely comprises this team. The Director's assistant sits on the team and is responsible for all logistical aspects related to ID card, computer access, etc. The HR department also meets with the new hire and introduces him/her to the district and has her/him complete relevant paperwork.

Once a new staff person is hired, she/he is given a tour and meets with all relevant office staff for a one-on-one explanation of the office person's function and how the function relates to the new staff person. Any necessary forms or procedures relevant to these individuals is reviewed with the new person. The new instructor is then paired with the other instructor who teaches that same level or content, and the established instructor is asked to be in charge of the new person's orientation to the curriculum, resources, and procedures as they relate to instruction. Education Assistants are paired with the instructor with whom they will most closely work, and that instructor will be in charge of the EA's orientation to classroom procedures and any necessary forms or equipment the EA is expected to use. The person in charge of the MARCS database is introduced to Mary Zimmerli, who does orientation and training on that system, as well as to individuals in other programs with similar roles who can assist with any overview and questions. Please refer to Document J.3 for an outline of our new staff orientation procedure.

The new staff member is asked to attend Summer Institute and/or the Support Services conference (whichever suits the needs of the position). The orientations at these events will help familiarize him/her with ABE (if needed) and her/his particular role. New staff are provided with a handbook and relevant individual handouts including the curriculum and scope and sequence if relevant to their work. Once a year, the Community Education Director gives an orientation to Community Education to all new staff members.

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

Individual staff members develop a personal plan each year based upon input from the director as to the consortium professional development plan and program goals (which are, in turn, developed based upon district, state and national goals which relate to our work). All staff meet individually with the director during the month of September to discuss the individual plan and how it might be supported. They will use two forms: the Personal Professional Development grid as seen in samples in Documents K-M and the form required by Q-Comp to report their goals (sample has not yet

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been provided to us.) Staff are also asked to submit a Professional Development Request form prior to actually registering for any event and to follow up the training with a written description of what they have learned and how to apply this in their work. Some of these professional development experiences are highlighted in monthly staff meetings. The PD request form allows for revision to the plans made in the initial annual plan document discussed in September. (See Document J.1 for the Professional Development Request and Report Form.)

### **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;

Our PD committee plans two to three on-site PD afternoons each year based upon topics selected through the survey and other means (as described previously).

In addition, time is taken at staff meetings for PD that is relevant to goals/needs of multiple staff, as determined by the Program Director in consultation with the committee and with input from individuals in their one-on-one meetings.

This year, the in-house training included the topics of Persistence, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Mental Health and ACES-TIF for all instructional staff. We also repeated Astrid Liden's workshop from the Regional session on "Fitting it all Together" for all instructional staff.

All staff were also asked to attend an on-site CASAS and TABE training if they needed a refresher. This option is offered periodically. In-between onsite training, staff are sent to Summer Institute or the Support Services conference for training or a refresher.

An optional training on Learner Web and the Digital Literacy Assessment was also offered to all instructional staff.

2. Broader education-focused local school districts' professional development;

Each year, all staff members are required to attend a district PD event during Workshop Week, and all instructional staff are required to do the follow up training held with other district teachers. All ABE staff is also required to attend a CE PD event during workshop week as well. For the last two years, the district PD has been done by the National Urban Alliance (NUA) on ways to address the achievement gap. The program director is part of ongoing district training with all district principals on NUA as well.

All instructional staff have been required to attend *Beyond Diversity* – a two-day workshop by West Metro Educational Partnership (WMEP) on white privilege and other equity issues. We have an Equity Team that has gone through this training first and which works on developing short PD for staff on this issue – including an Equity book club. Our district belongs to WMEP, and we get training through them at no additional cost.

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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;

Our staff has been actively involved in all state PD initiatives including:

- STAR -- Eight teachers trained and six EAs and five volunteers trained in the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) and fluency instruction. One staff member is on the State STAR leadership team.
- MNI -- Four instructors have completed this training and one staff member is on the state MNI leadership team.
- ACES -- two teachers went through the original training, two staff were on the organizing group, one staff member went through the Train The Trainer, and all instructional staff went through the follow-up "study circle" for ACES-TIF.
- UDL-Universal Design for Learning -- PANDA organized the training, which it has done at state, regional and two pilot areas. Six AAP teachers went through the West Metro pilot and then shared highlights of what they learned with all other AAP instructors.
- Project Ideal -- Program Director and two staff went through this training as well as an additional instructor who went through Project Ideal through another consortium where she also works.
- Summer Institute -- The program director, one-two office staff and four-five teachers usually attend all or part of Summer Institute (SI). Usually around two-three staff members present workshops. The Director is on the state SI committee in the marketing role.
- Regional training -- Usually around six-eight instructors and office staff attend the Metro training. PANDA staff present at all regional training events and occasionally other staff do so as well.
- GED change training/PD -- MLC etc. -- most Basic Skills staff participated in multiple training to prepare for the change.
- Minnesota GED Writing Institute -- A few staff participated in this initiative this year.
- Supplemental Services meetings -- PANDA staff attends these meetings.
- Support Staff conference -- All office staff attend the full conference each year.
- FastTRAC (FT) conferences and webinars -- The program director attends all of these along with integrated and bridge FT instructors.
- One-on-one technical training from MLC and on-site MLC training -- Several staff have taken advantage of the one-on-one technical training, and all staff attended a Smart Board training by MLC.
- GED conference -- The Program Director and GED proctor have attended these conferences.
- Managers' conference/grant conference -- The Program Director always attends and the, Counselor and PANDA staff have occasionally attended these conferences.
- Leadership Excellence Academy -- The Program Director is taking part in this multi-year training.
- MLC volunteer training. -- Some volunteers have taken advantage of this option. (See the section 2 narrative for more details on volunteer training.)

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### 4. Online professional development opportunities

Several instructors have taken advantage of the Mental Health on-line course conducted by PANDA through ATLAS. Many staff members have participated in webinars such as FastTRAC, MNI, and the Writing initiative. Some volunteers have benefited from the MLC on-line training.

### 5. Other professional development

Many of our ESL teachers participate in MinneTESOL and the Adult ESL Institute. Some have participated in Limited English Proficiency conferences. Our AADP and PANDA staff members participate in the Brain Injury conference as presenters and learners. PANDA has also participated in COABE. One staff member will be participating in the National ABE/Common Core training in Washington, D.C. in June. Our social studies teacher participates in The Minnesota Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference. Several staff have attended Mental Health workshops sponsored by NAMI.

### 6. Which professional development activities are mandatory and which are optional for ABE staff?

District-level training is mandatory for staff as are on-site PD options organized by the Director or the PD committee. Other training is encouraged and supported (see additional information provided earlier in this section.) New staff member in-house training, Summer Institute or the Support Services conference is mandatory for new staff. (See Document J.2 – Professional Development Guidelines for details.)

### 7. How does the consortium decide which opportunities to make mandatory?

Robbinsdale Area Schools District 281 requires AAP to make district events mandatory, and the Community Education Director makes the CE Fall Workshop mandatory. The ABE Program Director, in consultation with the PD committee, decides which PD events to hold on site and make mandatory based on overall program goals.

### 8. How does the consortium promote professional development opportunities to staff?

Upon receipt, invitations for outside events are forwarded to staff via email and are discussed at staff and team meetings to encourage participation. The events are also announced in the weekly staff news email (Week at a Glance) and are posted to the staff bulletin board. If an opportunity matches with a particular staff member's goals, the Director will talk with the individual directly to encourage participation.

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

Since our funding for PD is a percentage of our overall funding, the amount we have available for training will be decreasing considerably because of the decrease in our overall funding due to the drop off in contact hours after our recent relocation.

There is not a lack of interest in training on the staff side; rather, there are many demands on people's time and, in a recent survey, many staff members state they are finding it stressful to fit in

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all of the demands on their time. Moreover, given the move to Q-Comp, which will take place next year, there will be increased demands on instructor time for PLCs. In addition, one of the greatest professional development challenges is simply trying to respond effectively and efficiently to the volume of training needs related to federal, state and local directives and initiatives. There are many areas related to state and federal ABE initiatives and direction that can only be pursued with staff professional development. Staff often feel overwhelmed by expectations from multiple sources and are in need of prioritization direction for such development opportunities.

1. How are these challenges being addressed?

At the fall metro regional, there was a workshop on “Fitting it all Together” which explained how the initiatives fit together, and the Director shared it at an instructional team staff meeting for those who had not been able to attend the Regional event. In general, fitting PD into regular staff meeting times has been helpful in reducing cost and getting the maximum amount of staff trained.

We are trying to incorporate “tastes” of many initiatives with the full staff, often at regular meetings, so they at least have some awareness of them and then may choose whether to pursue an initiative further based on this awareness. When the Program Director meets with staff individually about PD goals, she directs them to those PD offerings that best fit their goals to help them choose from the many options. If the Director thinks an individual would be interested in a new PD option based on his/her goals, she will seek him/her out and help the individual to understand the option. Those who have attended PD are asked to share with others what they learned and opportunities to do so are given at meetings.

We have recently adopted guidelines for PD opportunities which will help the process become more clear and equitable.