

Section Five: Program Governance & Coordination

5.1. Describe the governance and decision-making processes in place between the consortium fiscal agent and its formal members.

The Adult Academic Program of Robbinsdale Area Schools is the sole member of the Robbinsdale Area Schools ABE consortium. Decision-making is done with the Adult Academic Program's Program Director and appropriate staff, often with the consultation of the Community Education Director. Forums for decision-making include ESL and Basic Skills Team meetings, Office Staff meetings and Licensed- and Full-staff meetings. As a result of the Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA) in which the Program Director is participating, there is also a leadership group comprised of representatives from day and evening staff, full- and part-time staff, Educational Assistants, office staff, volunteers and instructors. Input from these groups on programming and planning is ongoing.

Oversight of the Adult Academic Program is the responsibility of the Adult Academic Program Director. The Program Director meets monthly or bi-weekly with staff and every other month with the leadership team. For ongoing input, all Adult Academic Program staff are engaged in projects, committees and meetings throughout the year.

The Adult Academic Program Director meets monthly with the Director of Community Education and bi-weekly with all Community Education Program Directors. The Program Director also chairs a task force set up by the School Board, which plans and hosts meetings for community residents throughout the district to familiarize residents with district schools and services. The Program Director and Special Projects Coordinator also regularly staff booths at elementary, middle and high school parent events both to support the event and to share information with district parents about our services.

The Adult Academic Program is a member of the West Hennepin ABE Managers group. This group meets every other month to review and discuss regional topics, including Next Step transition programming, FastTRAC and other grant opportunities, professional development and ABE trends and direction.

The Program Director is a member of the Northwest Hennepin Human Services Healthy Together Northwest group. The group is composed of local agencies that share information and resources that support community members and, specifically, immigrants and refugees. Discussions focus on eliminating barriers to employment, available services to refugees and immigrants, program eligibility and referral procedures and program collaborations. The Program Director also attends various meetings and events of the Twin West Chamber of Commerce.

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The Program Director has a strong relationship with area mayors and city councils and has had mayors and council members in to speak at special events, at graduation and in classes. She worked with Senator Ann Rest and the mayor of Golden Valley, Shep Harris, to successfully lobby MTC to change bus routes after the move to our new location.

The Adult Academic Program's planning process begins with data information on learner needs, followed by input from learners and staff. Data comes from MARCS charts, bi-annual learner surveys and learner focus groups. The day and evening Student Advisory Boards are also actively involved in giving input to staff. Staff are also provided the opportunity to give feedback in online surveys conducted twice a year. In addition, the LEA Leadership group meets every other month to analyze data and research and work on providing program-planning input. This year AAP was pleased to also get the results of state surveys to add to the mix of information informing planning.

Program planning must align with state ABE and district standards. The program schedule addresses the identified needs of learners, taking state and federal ABE funding into consideration. Program goals are set annually considering the aforementioned information and discussed with staff at staff meetings. Teachers and support staff provide information to current and prospective learners.

5.1.1 Describe the purpose, frequency, invited attendees and required attendees at consortium wide meetings.

Since we are a consortium of only one member, our consortium-wide meetings are the meetings of our staff. A full-staff meeting launches the school year during workshop week each year. Full-staff meetings are then held every quarter. All staff are required to attend these full-staff meetings. During the in-between months, all licensed staff meet as well as office staff.

5.1.2. Describe how and when the annual consortium agreement gets developed and signed.

Since we are a consortium of only one member, we do not have need of an annual consortium agreement.

5.2 Describe your consortium's marketing and outreach plans and/or strategies

All of the marketing of the consortium's ABE offerings is done from the main office at the Adult Academic Program (AAP). AAP's marketing efforts include a variety of methods: flyers, program business cards, posters, postcards, direct mailings, 30-second Public Service Announcement on local cable TV, Constant Contact emails, Facebook postings and Twitter tweets. All marketing is distributed by mail, email and staff visits to a variety of local organizations, academic partners (e.g., Hennepin Technical College, HIREd, and North Hennepin Technical College), businesses and school district programs (e.g., K-12 Equity Specialists and K-12 parent involvement coordinators).

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Those interested in our classes then call or stop in to our office to further inquire about our school and classes. Furthermore, we rely on word-of-mouth advertising.

From experience, we have learned that providing a quality program for our learners motivates them to tell their friends about our classes. Therefore, we have a Refer-a-Friend campaign where learners win a prize when they introduce a friend to our school. They can also win prizes by “liking” us on Facebook or following us on Twitter. AAP also runs a bi-annual advertisement in our school district’s Community Ed: Adult Enrichment catalog. This catalog goes out to every resident in our school district.

We also target other district staff with our marketing in order to inform staff of our classes and services so they can refer interested parents and guardians and to our school. In addition, we do extensive marketing with social service agencies and other partners so they can make referrals to our school. Politicians and the Superintendent and School Board also receive marketing in the form of copies of news articles on our school or copies of the Journey’s Student Anthology with our students’ writings highlighted and copies of our school cookbook. We market to them in order that they can be supportive of our program in terms of program funding and other support which might come up in the course of their work.

Our Disability program (AADP) advertises in publications that target individuals with brain injuries and those who have suffered strokes. AADP teachers also meet one-on-one with, or give presentations to, social workers and agencies that work with this population in order to inform them of our services and request their help in spreading the word to those who could benefit.

We divide our marketing efforts into three areas of focus: 1) Attracting New Learners, 2) Retaining Current Learners and 3) Increasing Learner hours in school. The following is a list of some of our past and current marketing efforts.

Past and Current Marketing Efforts

Attract New Learners

- KARE 11 online ad
- Electronic sign outside the school on major road
- AAP Facebook and Twitter Accounts
- Email blasts using the district’s Constant Contact list/software
- Direct mailing and emails to current and previous learners about Special Classes and other opportunities
- Posters at district E-12 schools
- Strong presence at the Workforce Center with regular classes
- Flyers at libraries and area businesses with tear off strips
- AAP and GED videos: our website, orientations, Channel 12, Facebook

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- “Every Door” Direct Mailings: Targets specific zip codes near our school which are deemed to have a higher concentration of our demographic
- Kidpack flyers – 4,500 flyers per month go into weekend food backpacks for eligible children in our district
- E-12 open houses: we set up our table-top display and hand out flyers
- Refer-a-friend award program for learners
- Flyers to our partners: HTC, HIRED, Workforce Center
- Apartment Manager Meetings: hosted by local police departments
- Apartment events: organized by the district school board to make more connections with the community
- Signs on the fence along Douglas Drive
- ELL Family Nights at elementary and middle schools
- Messages on AAP website
- Flyers at learners’ places of worship and Order of Service inserts
- Email and Flyers to district’s Equity Specialists/Community Liaisons
- Visits to area businesses (e.g., ARC, Dollar Store, bakery, and shoe repair)

Retain Current Learners

- Cookbook with learner recipes collected, written and typed by learners and published for them to sell and give to their friends.
- Bulletin boards
- Learner-of -the-Month Awards
- Facebook
- Flyers and posters placed around our school
- Targeted snail mail: GED testers who have not finished; GED preppers who have not yet tested
- Attendance Awards/Posting top attendance each month
- School events: Welcome Back Assembly; Sing-a-long; Year-end party
- Press releases: TV & newspaper exposure
- Encourage getting learner writing published in *Journey’s* and *Easy English News*, among others.

Increase Learner Hours in school

(Work to encourage learners to come as close to the start of class as possible, stay until the end of class and to not miss days.)

- Encourage all learners to consider utilizing Distance Learning by introducing the concept in class, offering frequent opportunities to sign up and open labs where those without computers at home or who have questions can come for assistance.
- Learner/teacher conferences twice a year in which goal achievement is discussed, and the importance of regular and full attendance are tied to goal achievement.

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- The relevance and utility of the subject matter helps to encourage attendance as does increased feeling of learner camaraderie (see Retain Current Learners section)

Future Efforts

- Automated phone calls to district parents in our target audience to inform them of our program and special opportunities
- Batch GEO mailings - a program that shows where learners are coming from (per class)
- Bus placards on buses that service our area in cooperation with other ABE programs in the area
- Radio ads on ethnic radio stations in cooperation with other ABE programs in the area