Section Two
Accountability

"The AEOA GED program is great. I love the smaller space and one-on-one help. It made it a lot easier to work on my tests and stuff. [Teacher] is an awesome teacher and I wouldn't have been able to do it without his help. Out of all the schools I've been to, [Teacher] is my favorite teacher. I never thought I'd get my GED done so soon and I never thought I'd be going to college! With AEOA's teachers' help, I did it.

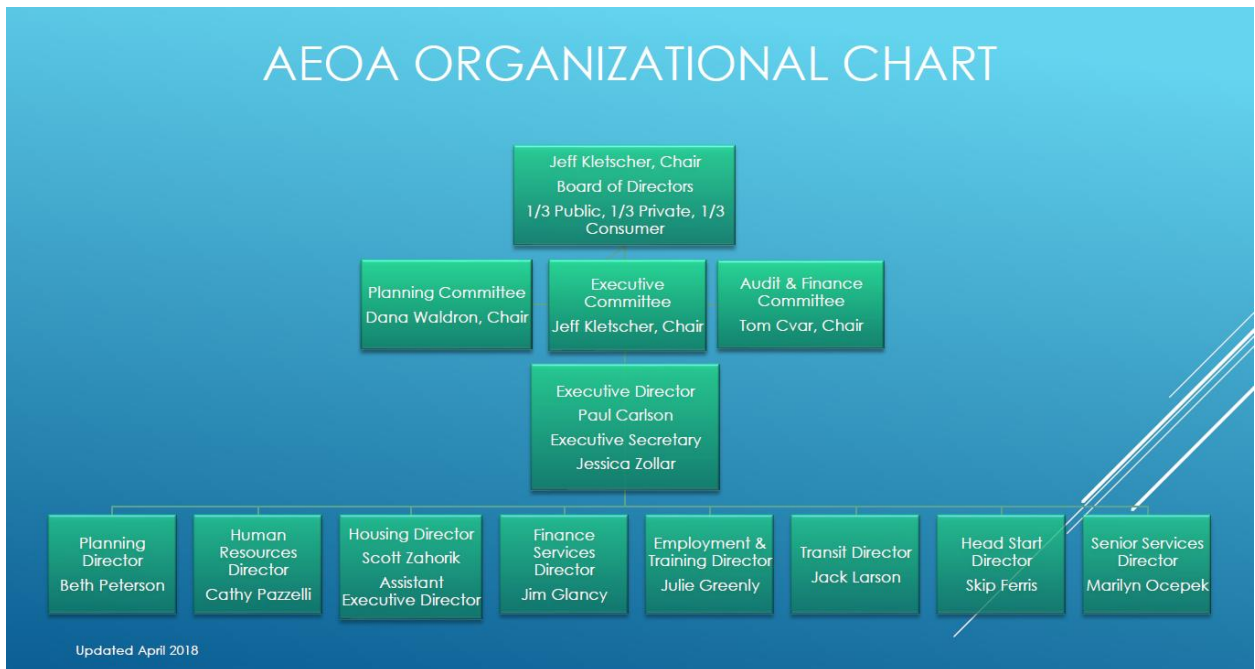*~GED Learner*

2.1 Governance and Decision-Making Process

AEOA ABE is a consortium of 30 school districts and one regional corrections work farm, Northeast Regional Corrections Center (NERCC). AEOA, a community-based organization, is the fiscal agent for state and federal funds and is not part of any district accounting program and does not deal with MARSS or UFARS. Without a fiscal tether to the school districts, our strongest ties lie within the Employment and Training Department of AEOA, six WorkForce Centers and six community colleges in our region.

In the past, the ABE manager has tried to convene consortium meetings with the 30 community education directors for the school districts with mixed success. About one-fourth of the districts are tiny and we receive minimum base funding in our state allocation for them. In small districts, the position of community education director is an add-on to someone's job, usually the superintendent's. Previously, the community education directors found it difficult to convene as a group. Instead, the ABE manager would travel to each district for individual meetings. Time limitations and mileage costs ended that. Then, the program moved to having a "State of ABE" letter complete with each district's statistics sent to districts every fall. Changes in the statewide reporting system limited availability of district specific outcomes and made that moot.
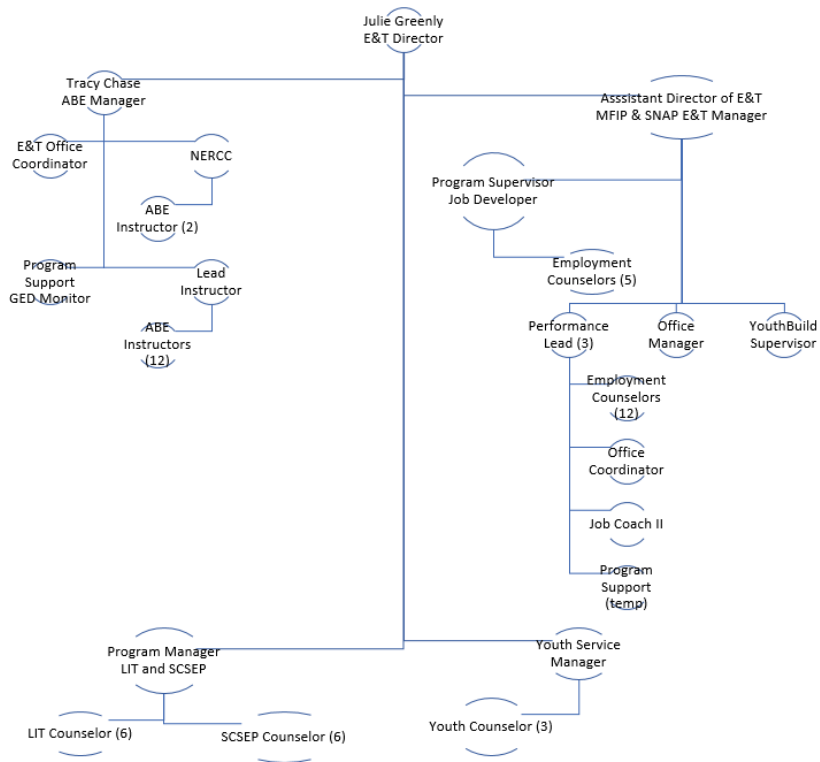
However, the ABE Program Manager sits on the Workforce Development Board Career Pathways committee; other agency staff sit on Family Service Collaborative Boards, Perkins School-to-Work Consortium teams and other community planning committees with several representatives of school districts. Through these committees AEOA ABE gathers input on programming and possible collaborations. The informal connections made between the ABE

teachers and the school administrators and teachers out in their communities, also keep the lines of communications open.

ABE does the bulk of its planning with the AEOA Employment and Training Department (E&T). The ABE Program Manager is part of the E&T Management Team and reports to its Director, along with the managers of public assistance, youth service, senior employment, dislocated worker, and other training programs. They meet bi-weekly to discuss current programming, collaborative efforts, funding opportunities, and staffing. All department directors (eight total) report to AEOA's Executive Director. The Executive Director reports directly to the Agency's Board of Directors. The Agency is governed by a board comprised of at least one-third low-income community representatives, one-third public officials, and the remainder as private sector representatives.

AEOA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Employment and Training Department Organizational Chart

Julie Greenly
E&T Director

Tracy Chase
ABE Manager

AsssIstant Director of E&T
MFIP & SNAP E&T Manager

E&T Office
Coordinator

NERCC

ABE
Instructor (2)

Program Supervisor
Job Developer

Program
Support
GED Monitor

Lead
Instructor

Employment
Counselors (5)

ABE
Instructors
(12)

Performance
Lead (3)

Office
Manager

YouthBuild
Supervisor

Employment
Counselors
(12)

Office
Coordinator

Job Coach II

Program
Support
(temp)

Program Manager
LIT and SCSEP

Youth Service
Manager

LIT Counselor (6)

SCSEP Counselor (6)

Youth Counselor (3)

As described earlier, AEOA ABE is not attached to any specific school district, so our governance and decision-making is done more within the agency, whose mission is poverty-based, rather than with school districts, whose focus is education. In the past, AEOA provided several small allocations to local districts as they felt they we owed the funding due to their census counts. Through education by MDE at a statewide training, AEOA learned that districts could not receive a portion of the base ABE allocation unless they provided ABE staff or programming themselves or could prove ABE related expenditures. Once this was conveyed to the districts they stopped invoicing for a portion of the allocation and have been very hands-off on programming.

The ABE Program Manager is open to ideas from any of the districts we serve, but most often is only contacted for updated program information to be placed in the local Community Education Calendar. While governance and decision-making are centered within AEOA (the

fiscal agent), we remain responsive to suggestions from consortium members. We have partnered with our districts for ParaProfessional training with missed results. The collaboration was a short-term training performed by AEOA ABE to help prepare community members for Para positions within the districts. Additionally, we have attempted short-term services in remote areas upon district requests. Most recently, we provided itinerant services at Nett Lake, Ely, and Cook. These sites were 61, 49, and 33 miles from the nearest permanent classroom location respectively. Through the years, the school districts have been pleased with the services we have provided. We have an open line of communication and they trust us to continue to do a good job.

2.2 Program Quality and Accountability Plans and Procedures

AEOA is the only fiscal agent and has no sub-grantees. AEOA ABE complies with all applicable federal and state laws for administering our programming. The entire ABE program is audited regularly to assure it is following GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles). ABE is assigned a bookkeeper and the manager works closely with her on the Sage MIP Fiscal Accounting System. The ABE bookkeeper sends reports to MDE when requested to do so. She also follows proper procedure for requesting federal funds on a monthly basis. The ABE program manager is responsible for creating and monitoring budgets for both state and federal dollars using the AEOA fiscal system and SERVS for federal funds. She also submits all fiscal information at the end of the program year as required.

Although the AEOA executive director and chief financial officer oversee all fiscal matters, each agency department head is responsible for ensuring individual program compliance. The ABE Program Manager regularly attends MDE provided webinars and in-person trainings

around program policy and procedures. She conveys that information to AEOA administration and program staff as appropriate. Staff are provided professional development for any new policy put in place and have ample opportunity to request guidance and provide feedback.

NRS outcomes are shared with staff on a regular basis. After the program year numbers are crunched in May, the ABE program manager shares general results with staff as part of professional development. As needed, the program's Office Coordinator will create graphs and charts for sharing information with AEOA's Board and agency and department leadership. Statistics are shared regularly at the previously mentioned bi-monthly department management meetings. The Program Manager discusses individual classroom and instructor performance with the Lead Instructor to develop a plan to address issues as they arise. They also develop methods for showing appreciation to those who are performing well.

All program staff have been trained on the Student Information Database and input their own daily attendance. They can pull any number of reports from the database to monitor student and classroom achievements. Staff are regularly reminded to do so and the Program Manager often discusses program performance at professional development gatherings and as part of annual performance reviews. As part of staff observations, the Program Manager and Lead Instructor look over student files and attendance sheets with the instructor to be certain the required paper records are being maintained and recorded accurately. The instructors keep these files in locked cabinets for five years and then shred them, in accordance with MDE policy. Student contact hour data is utilized by the Program Manager in making decisions on classroom locations and staffing levels.

We compile additional data reports as requested by Community Education directors and our Workforce Development Board partners.

2.3 Goal Setting and Educational Progress

Each AEOA ABE student is provided an intake and orientation process which includes development of a Personal Education Plan and setting reasonable goals as outlined in Attachment A. This intake process includes direct conversation between the student and teacher to identify personal challenges and potential barriers to success. Having a complete picture allows both the student and the teacher to set realistic goals for their educational plan. Teachers assist students in developing short-term and long-term goals and steps to achieve them. For example, GED students are encouraged to think beyond just passing the test and develop a plan that includes the beginnings of a career pathway. If they are planning on attending college, they need to understand how their GED test schedule relates to college admission deadlines, program waiting lists and the FAFSA application process. Those looking for work are presented with ideas about how choosing one part-time job over another could provide the foundation for their dream job. Checking out careerwise.minnstate.edu and MCIS opens up a vision of what careers are out there and how well some additional work experience and training pay off over time. For many clients, the realities of child care, their lack of transportation self-sufficiency, and time and money limitations need to be taken in account, and the PEP includes plans to connect students with AEOA or other community resources to resolve identified barriers. Our intake process includes going through the MN Children's Defense Fund tool, Bridge to Benefits, to identify potential resources for students. As the

student and instructor have more interaction throughout the course, the goals and timelines may be adjusted to account for the barriers they are working with and opportunities that arise.

The process varies very little based on type of student, however, students enrolled in our college campus Learning Communities come to us with much of their goal planning complete due to their engagement with campus Student Support Services. We still perform our intake and orientation, but pull on previously developed plans in partnership with college staff.

Clients with Conditional Work Referrals have a 30-hour limit. They could have broad goals for improving employability listed in their referral, such as developing computer skills, or more specific ones, such as 10-key pad proficiency. If they are on unemployment, they may have a job search checklist from the State of MN that they are working through which includes developing a resume, using email and doing internet searches. The ABE instructor will help them develop a timeline that prioritizes their tasks and breaks them into manageable steps. They also discuss practical suggestions for how to continue to build their skills outside of class and after the course is over through networking and with resources at the local library.

Our program encourages review of the PEP every six months or if a student achieves a goal or has life changes that could affect their plan. Distance Learning students still attend an in-person intake/orientation process, but may not meet as often with their instructor in-person to update their PEP due to the nature of the program. Communication lines are kept open between student/teachers via texting, email, and webinars as applicable.

Timelines can vary per student depending on their goals, potential barriers and challenges faced, and life circumstance. When students get discouraged about the time commitment, sometimes it is useful to remind them that if they were still in high school, the State of MN

would require 1,020 instruction hours per year. On average students engage with our program

for thirty hours of instruction before moving on. Even students who don't work with ABE for the

12-hour minimum have been helped by their ABE experience. Some clients get a resume

together, find a job, and consider their mission accomplished, even if it only took them a couple

hours. We encourage them to think longer term, but understand life circumstances often

dictates how long they can be in our program.

Section Two
Accountability
Documents

"*I came to college having a very low GPA, and believing, "Ds get degrees.", but [the teachers] helped show me that the work and effort I put in to my school work matters. I am now proud to say that my first semester I was on the Dean's List, and my second semester I had one B and two As. [The teachers] not only helped me with homework, but they have also set high standards and helped shape me in to the woman I am. They have been mentors and friends when I needed, and they are women that I aspire to be like.*"

~AS, College Learning Community Student

AEOA ABE Intake and Orientation Procedures

Staff contact	Tracy Chase
Date of last update	August 2016
Policy guidance	From Minnesota ABE Policies website (www.mnabe.org/abe-law-policy/mn-abe-policies): • Conditional Work Referral Policy • Eligible Student Policy • Eligible Content Policy

Introduction

State Mandate for determining ABE eligibility:

Adult Basic Education means services or instruction below the postsecondary level for individuals:

- Who have attained 17 years of age; and
- Who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; and
- Who qualify under one or more of the following conditions:
    - Are unable to speak, read or write the English language;
    - Do not have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education;
    - Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individual to function effectively in society.
- Students are not eligible for ABE services if they are enrolled in a public or private K-12 program – this includes public or private regular high schools, charter schools, ALCs and other alternative high school programs.
- Students who are enrolled in postsecondary institutions are eligible for ABE services if they meet the three conditions above. Please note they cannot be dually enrolled in a K-12 program (e.g. a PSEO student).
- Visas may not be valid for ABE services:
    - ABE programs cannot be providing services to (counting ABE contact hours for) clients who are visiting the US on either student visas or tourist.
    - Visas that that are work-focused (tax paying) non-immigrant visas or are immigrant-focused, meaning the person intends on staying in the United States, are acceptable for ABE services.
    - ABE programs are not required to check an ABE student's visa status.

State Mandate for Intake and Orientation:

At the time of intake and as an ongoing process throughout the program year programs must have an individual goal-setting process with each learner:
- Establish program goals and expectations for each student.
- Identify an appropriate program of instruction and schedule.
- Identify learners who have any Secondary NRS Goals of employment, retain employment, GED/H.S. Diploma, or Post-secondary education/training.

AEOA ABE Consortium Intake and Orientation Policy

Intake and Orientation Process
- All AEOA ABE sites will include dedicated time to meet with each new student to determine if they meet the criteria for student eligibility.
- Instructors are expected to meet with each student to discover their individual goals for wanting to attend ABE classes.
- Each entering student will be informed of all services AEOA ABE can offer to support the student.
- Each entering student will be enrolled in classes that are appropriate for their skill level, aligned to their goals and best ensure the student's progress and success.
- Instructors will identify students who have any core NRS goals of employment, retain employment, GED/diploma or post-secondary education or training.

Some sites will provide one-to-one intake, registration and orientation sessions. Other sites will provide group intake and registration sessions dedicated to ESL or ABE learners; smaller sites will offer walk-in intake and registration that require no appointment.

The student orientation and intake policies, as with all the other program policies, are included in the Teacher's Orientation Manual "TOM". The TOM is a dynamic resource, constantly being updated as mandates change. The ABE Lead Instructor and/or ABE Program Manager review the policies in TOM with each new instructor. Additional information on ABE policies are provided by email and at staff meetings and as needs arise, as when SID reporting procedures change.

During Intake students/instructors will:

1. Determining Eligibility
   - Students are asked to bring a Driver's License or Minnesota ID to the Intake/Orientation session This is used to verify their age. If a student doesn't have ID:
     - They are asked if anyone can verify their age.
     - No one is turned away for lacking ID and not having someone to vouch for them, we will take their word about their age.
   - Student is not in K-12 Education
     - If over 21, no problem.
     - If under 21, we ask for the date that they dropped out of secondary school
       - If the drop date is questionable, they are asked to sign a consent for the instructor to contact the high school or ALC.
   - A preliminary educational need is determined through conversation then verified through a pre-test.
   - Conditional Work Referral students must have a referral from the local Workforce Center
     - If one wasn't sent, the instructor must find out who the learner is working with and get one.
     - A CWR is eligible for career exploration, employment skills, basic computer skills, and financial literacy.
     - If the learner self-identifies a need below high school completion, they should be encouraged to pre-test.
2. Acknowledge they have read and understand the Tennessen Warning.
3. Complete the AEOA ABE SID Intake Form.
4. Sign a permission for release of information for information sharing as necessary with an employer, workforce center, counselor, Probation Officer or GED testing center.

During Orientation instructors/students will:

1. The instructor will give students an orientation to the AEOA ABE program in a group setting or one-to-one setting:
   - Program services available
   - Location options with schedules – days and times
   - Attendance options
   - Student expectations – attendance, progress, post-testing, classroom participation and behavior, communication
   - Classroom routines
   - Materials information
   - Address practices that enhance success and goal completion
   - Progress expectation
   - Site tour
2. The student will meet with the instructor and finalize their specific primary NRS goal and may set secondary NRS goals which are documented on the Personal Education Plan (PEP)
3. Read and sign the Learner Contract
4. Review of possible attendance or participation barriers, such as work, childcare, transportation, health concerns, etc.
5. Complete a pre-test to determine an EFL
   - A pre-test will be given within 12 contact hours if they are unable to test during orientation
   - CWR students do not need a post-test, but the instructor will need to obtain a referral from the Workforce Center if one was already sent

During orientation or later:

1. Completion of the "Bridge to Benefits" online needs assessment
   - Assist students with applying for or provide information for any programs/services identified by the "Bridge to Benefits"
   - Provide SNAP orientation, if the student is eligible
2. Complete a learning styles inventory and discuss personal learning style

Re-Entry Process

Returning students, who have stopped out for more than 60 days, need to complete the intake and orientation process to ensure we have up-to-date student information and goals. Depending on when the student last attended classes and was tested, the student may be required to complete an assessment. All re-entering students will be retested if their last test is more than 12 months old.

Re-entering students will meet with the instructor to:
- Address conflicts or issues that interfere with progress or goal completion
- Establish additional support to enhance success

SID Data Entry

Once the student has completed the Intake and enrollment process, the instructor is responsible for entering the student into SID by:

- Searching to see if the student is already entered in SID
- Completing all summary information about the student

- Entering assessment scores (may be done later)
- Scheduling the student into the appropriate class(es)
- Entering log information such as: health care, barriers, etc.
- Setting goals

Instructors are required to send enrollment paperwork, for new students, to the Program Specialist II at the end of each month for review. Instructors are responsible for entering and maintaining all SID data for their classrooms. In addition to enrolling students, instructors are required to:

- Update student data as changes occur
- Enter student attendance hours at the end of each day
- Exit students who have stopped out for more than 30 days
- Run data clean up reports quarterly
- Run Table A to check NRS goal progress at least quarterly
- Make corrections and updates in SID based on reports, information, and/or feedback from ABE Program Assistant, Lead ABE Instructor, or ABE Program Manager

Personal Education Plan and NRS Goals Follow Up

Each student will develop a PEP with their instructor during orientation. As students' progress, they will meet with their instructor, several times a year, to:

- Discuss their progress in meeting their goals
- Update their PEP
- Eliminate goals that are no longer relevant
- Add new goals
- Discuss current barriers or needs
- Go over assessment results

Progress Monitoring

Each year all AEOA ABE sites are expected to meet or exceed the annual NRS negotiated targets for all NRS levels. Quarterly progress reports are generated, by the Program Specialist II, to monitor consortium and program student progress rates. These reports are shared with the ABE Program Manager and Lead ABE Instructor.

The Program Specialist II monitors all student records to assure that:

- Goals are appropriate and likely to be achieved within the program year
- Classes are meeting post-testing rates to help identify areas where post-testing is strong or needs improvement

AEOA ABE Assessment Procedures

Staff Contact	Tracy Chase
Date of last update	April 3, 2017
Policy guidance	From Minnesota ABE Policies website (www.mnabe.org/abe-law-policy/mn-abe-policies): • Assessment Policy

Introduction:

Minnesota Department of Education Assessment Mandate:

ABE programs must use National Reporting System (NRS) approved adult standardized assessments (CASAS, TABE, BEST Plus) in order to:
- Pre-test and place students in an NRS Educational Functioning Level (EFL) within the first 12 hours of instruction.
- Administer subsequent CASAS/TABE/BEST PLUS tests to measure NRS EFL completion/gain.
- Assessments need to be administered in a standardized and consistent way by all programs statewide.
- Program staff administering assessments will be trained in the test administration and scoring.

MDE Required Benchmarks for Local Programs
- Educational Functioning Level (EFL) completion/gain – negotiated NRS target percentages
- Test students every 40 to 60 hours following approved assessment testing guidelines
  - Students cannot be testing prior to receiving 40 hours of instruction unless a specific, individual waiver is granted.
  - The post-testing rate for students testing at intervals of greater than 60 hours must not exceed 90 percent.
- Maintain a 60% post-testing rate for all participants within the program year.

AEOA ABE Assessment Policy:

Based on above Minnesota Adult Basic Education Assessment Mandates, AEOA ABE has adopted the following guidelines and practices at all AEOA ABE sites.

Assessments Used by the Consortium and For Which Students:

All AEOA ABE Instructors shall use the TABE Locator and the appropriate level of the TABE to determine an EFL for all ABE, GED, life skills, Intermediate/Advanced ESL, and Career Pathways learners. ABE Instructors shall use the CASAS to determine an EFL for Beginning ESL learners.

The following are the program approved assessment forms and levels:

Name/Series	Content	Format	Forms/Level
TABE 9 and 10 Survey and Complete Battery	- Reading - Complete Math (computation and Applied) - Language	Paper-based	L: Literacy E: Easy M: Medium D: Difficult A: Advanced
CASAS Beginning Literacy	Reading	Paper-based	27 and 28
CASAS Life Skills	Math	Paper-based	31-38, 505, 506

Pre-Testing and Enrollment:

1. All students will be pre-tested when entering our program prior to classroom placement.

2. Exception: Conditional Work Referral Learners are exempt from CASAS/TABE testing. They will be given performance-based assessments specific to their area of instruction. They will also have a referral from the local Workforce Center in their file. If those learners are enrolled in another AEOA ABE classes, they are required to be pre and post-tested.

3. Returning students, who do not have a current and valid pre-test score within the past 3 months, must be reassessed before starting classes again.

4. If a student is transferred from another AEOA ABE site or program their assessment information is forwarded and reviewed to ensure proper classroom placement and instruction.

5. If a student transfers from another ABE program, outside of AEOA, the instructor will look for assessment information in the SID data program and/or contact the ABE program to discuss assessment.

6. The test results are explained to the student in the context of a discussion about skill level, personal goals, time commitment, and instructional options. At that time, the student also will be alerted to expect interim tests to assess progress.

Post-Test Procedures and Guidelines:

1. All new students will be post-tested within the first 42-45 hours of attendance to ensure a minimum of 60% of all students being both pre and post tested.

2. If a learner notifies their instructor they are soon to exit the program, and the learner has 40 or more hours of instructional time since the last assessment, efforts will be made to provide post-testing to assess student progress before the student exits.

3. AEOA ABE instructors will run an assessment report in SID, at the end of each month, for all their classes to make sure that students are post-tested when they are eligible.

4. Ongoing post-testing is required after 40 – 60 hours of instruction throughout the program year if the student has not made a level change during the program year. Students who make a level gain during the program year may be post-tested after 40 – 80 hours during the remainder of that program year.

5. ABE Instructor, with the help of the Lead ABE Instructor or Program Manager, will complete quarterly reviews of the students who have not made a level gain. If the student has persisted in the program beyond the prescribed post-testing recommendations, arrangements will be made to post-test the student as soon as possible.

Testing Procedures & Reporting:

1. Learners will be assessed following the test publishers' guidelines in the area in which their instruction will be focused.

2. Special testing accommodations are provided for students. Instructors make accommodations such as finding quiet space for students to test alone and/or allowing extra time for assessments if needed. If the student has been allowed extra time, instructors will have the students mark their place at the end of the allotted time but allow them to continue and finish the test if they are able to do so. Test scores are based on the number correct that were completed during the official time. Without the pressure of the time limit, students may be able to demonstrate that they have skills to do more types of problems. The extra information gleaned from allowing students to finish the test is helpful in planning their course of instruction, and later, instructors can help with the test-taking skills that will help the learner increase speed.

3. When administering the TABE test, instructors will first administer the TABE locator to improve the chance of giving each student the correct level of the test, decreasing the occurrence of invalid test scores.

4. If a learner's test score is outside the validity range for the specific test they were given, they will be re-tested immediately or as soon as possible with the appropriate test.

5. If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has different abilities in different areas, the ABE program will place the student according to the NRS lowest education functioning level. The lowest EFL should be used to determine educational gains in subsequent assessments.

6. Instructors will enter the assessment information into the SID data system.

Testing Practices:

1. The classroom instructor is responsible for completing post-testing for all students assigned to the instructor's class.

2. Instructors have SID access for all their class sites. The ABE Program Manager, Lead ABE Instructor, and Program Specialist II all have administrative access in SID to monitor pre and post-testing.

3. Instructors are required to check post-testing rates, using the reports feature in SID, for all their classes. Instructors are required to check post-testing rates on a quarterly basis. The ABE Program Manager, Lead ABE Instructor, and Program Specialist II will also track program wide post-testing rates every month. Instructors will be contacted if issues are found.

4. In addition to the standardized testing used for NRS reporting, instructors are encouraged to use other assessments in listening, speaking, writing, reading, math or technology to assess students' skills and progress during the course of instruction.

Training, Management, Monitoring and Use of Assessment Data:

1. Annually the ABE Program Manager will arrange for all sites to have adequate and current testing materials.

2. Instructors are required to attend TABE and/or CASAS training every five years to stay qualified to administer the assessment(s). This training is available at SI. The ABE program manager will arrange local training if enough instructors need to upgrade their skills.

3. At the time of hire all new instructors will be trained in the administration of the TABE/CASAS by the ABE Program Manager or ABE Lead Instructor. Training will include:

   - NRS outcomes measures
   - EFL and Target goals
   - MDE mandates
   - AEOA ABE Assessment Policy
   - Site pre and post-testing procedures
   - Reporting procedures
   - Class post-testing monitoring in SID and quarterly post-testing reports
   - TABE testing scores in relation to GED testing
   - Test taking skills
   - Assessment administration certification training (CASAS/TABE)

   4. The Program Specialist II will determine whether all learners (other than those exception students) have a pre-test by running a Table A at the end of each month. If a student does not

have a pre-test the instructor will be notified, and they will be responsible for determining why there is not test information and administer the test if necessary.

5. The Program Specialist II will provide quarterly post-testing reports for the ABE Program Manager and Lead ABE Instructor. Sites with less than 60% posting testing rates will be asked to examine their student data and develop a plan to improve post-testing rates.

6. Management and leadership will use assessment information to
   - Assure assessment data is being entered in SID monthly or quarterly.
   - Evaluate program NRS Table Reports and performance compared the MDE Negotiated NRS Target percentages.
   - Communicate individual program and consortium performance data to instructors.
   - Facilitate program changes, as needed, based on data.

7. Instructors will use assessment data and information to
   - Initially place students in correct class/course of study.
   - Track individual students.
   - Encourage learner regular attendance to increase goal achievement.
   - Provide progress feedback to students.
   - Promote or move students into other classes as students gain skills.
   - Evaluate curriculum and instruction in their classrooms and re-align as necessary to improve student performance.

AEOA ABE Contact Hour Tracking Procedures

Staff contact	Tracy Chase
Date of last update	February 2018
Policy guidance	From Minnesota ABE Policies website (www.mnabe.org/abe-law-policy/mn-abe-policies): • Contact Hour Policy • Contact Hour Rounding Policy • Distance Learning Policy • GED Testing Center Contact Hours Policy
Additional resources	Minnesota ABE Distance Learning website (www.mnabe-distancelearning.org)

Introduction

The AEOA ABE Consortium follows the MDE ABE Learner Contact Hour Policy to record all attendance data in the SID software.

State Mandate for counting Contact Hours:

1. Only count the hours of ABE eligible students, who have a written PEP, as described by the MDE ABE Eligible Student Policy
2. On-site, Traditional Instruction
   - Do count
     - Student instructional hours for eligible ABE students, with a PEP, attending a group or individualized class
     - Student instructional hours for eligible ABE students, with a PEP, delivered through a licensed ABE instructor or a trained volunteer tutor/instructor
     - Eligible student participation in ABE program activities including intake, orientation, support service coordination, goal setting, assessment, evaluation, and any time the student spends interacting with ABE-funded staff or trained ABE volunteers to discuss or debrief learning
     - Family Literacy - A Family Literacy/Even Start program must have four components: adult literacy, parenting, parent-child interaction and early childhood education
   - Do not count
     - Traditional homework or other forms of homework such as working on assigned learning projects, doing research, or practicing learning tasks on a home computer
     - Time reportedly spent at home reading to children
     - Family Literacy/Even Start program hours when students attend the adult literacy component of the program

- - Even Start program hours when there no ABE state, federal or levy funds contributed to support the Even Start program.
3. Off-site and/or Non-Traditional Instruction
    - Count
        - Student hours in other programs or organizations if ABE-funded staff or volunteer tutors provide ABE instruction, directly to ABE eligible students, and/or related services for ABE-eligible students and if any portion of the total program cost is borne by the state-funded ABE program
        - Workplace Education, Independent Study, Job Shadowing hours where paid ABE staff or trained tutor are in contact with or working directly with the student (e.g. - assessment, goal setting, instruction, debriefing, etc.) on his or her ABE-related goals
    - Do not count
        - Student hours which are fully paid for by another program such as Intensive Work English, Adult Diploma under 21, or programs that are fully paid for by other organizations such as businesses, labor organizations, colleges, correctional facilities, governmental units or private foundations
4. On-Line/Distance Learning - To qualify as a distance-learning program, the program must be specifically designed as a complete, on-line ABE program (intake, assessment, instruction, evaluation) for ABE-eligible students.
    - Count
        - Hours that the student spends interacting (via computer or telephone) with paid ABE staff or trained volunteers on any aspect of the student on-line instructional program
        - Proxy contact hours as defined by the ABE Distance Education Policy
5. GED Testing Centers
    - Hours that a program participant spends testing at an official MN GED testing center may be counted
        - Only examinees that were enrolled and that received instructional help (with a PEP) at the ABE consortia prior to taking the official GED test
        - Only actual test-taking time may be counted

Daily contact Hour Counting and Recording:

All AEOA ABE classrooms will use sign-in sheets to track student hours. When a student enters the classroom for instruction, intake/orientation, advising, or independent study, they must be instructed to sign in. Signing in entails writing their name and the time that they entered the classroom. When a student is done, they must be instructed to sign out. To sign out, a student will write in the time that they are leaving the classroom and lists what they came in for/worked on that day. Should a student leave for an extended period, they must sign out and then sign back in when they return. Each instructor is expected to instruct their students in how to use the daily sign-in sheets and the

importance of accuracy. This instruction begins in orientation and continues throughout the learners' attendance.

Instructors will monitor their daily sign-in sheets at the end of each class to assure students have followed the process so that accurate information can be entered in SID. Instructors will enter the attendance for each class they teach before the end of the day or before classes start on the next day. Although AEOA ABE is moving toward the "managed enrollment" model, many class sites still have drop in hours. This means that students don't always come in to class on the hour and leave on the hour or on the half hour. Instructors must enter the individual amount of time the student participated in instruction following the rounding procedure described in the MDE ABE Contact Hour Rounding Policy. In theory, in managed enrollment classes all students come at the same time and leave at the same time. This is not always the case. If a student leaves a managed enrollment class early or comes in late, their time must be adjusted on the class sign in sheet, so hours are only recorded for the time that they were in class. The ABE Program Manager and/or ABE Lead Instructor will compare what has been written on the daily sign-in sheet and the data entered into SID when they come for site visits.

Proxy Hours Counting and Recording

Distance Learning (DL) hours are reported by ABE Instructors in the SID data system. The platforms used are iPathways, Edmentum Plato, and Khan Academy. AEOA ABE has one instructor who has gone through Distance Learning 101 and they provide training and support to any instructors who is interested in starting a DL class at their site. All DL classes must be approved by the ABE Program Manager to assure that they follow MDE ABE Distance Learning Policy. Distance Learning hours must be recorded as either proxy hours (asynchronous hours) based on the parameters provided in the MDE Distance Learning Policy or face to face (classroom/synchronous hours) according to the ABE Contact Hour Policy. DL may be delivered via hybrid model of instruction where students attend class and use a DL platform as part of their instruction. With a hybrid model of instruction instructors record time using the daily sign-in sheet method described above and the time is entered in their DL class site in SID. A DL class site will be created in SID to assure that students are not counted in both the regular class site and in DL. Students must be instructed to list the DL learning platform and include which modules they work on/complete on the class sign in sheet. For traditional (asynchronous hours) DL class, proxy hours must be calculated based on the MDE ABE DL policy. Hours are based on the units completed and allowable contact hours. AEOA ABE currently has only one instructor offering a traditional DL class site. This instructor runs the reports and records contact hours quarterly. These hours are placed in the DL-Proxy class listed in SID. Paper copies of on-line unit completion verification are kept in the student files.

GED Testing Contact Hours Counting and Recording

All ABE Instructors will work with their GED students to help them set up an account on the myged.com website. During the set-up instructors will encourage students to give AEOA ABE viewing

privileges for their GED tests results. ABE Instructors will also encourage students to sign up for GED tests with them so that the instructor is aware of testing dates, can remind students of testing dates/times, and can give the Program Specialist II a "heads up" to check for the student's score after their testing date. The Program Specialist II will be responsible for entering all student's official GED test scores and contact hours into the SID data base. The Program Specialist II will enter student GED testing hours into SID in accordance with the MDE ABE Contact Hour Counting Policy. AEOA ABE will only count the hours that a program participant spends testing at an official MN GED testing center. Regarding GED testing, a program participant is defined as an examinee that was/is enrolled and that received/receives instructional help (with a PEP) at an AEOA ABE consortia class site prior to taking the official GED test. Only actual test-taking time may be counted. AEOA ABE still has trouble with limited Pearson Vue GED testing sites. Funds secured through GED testing hours help to employ and official ABE GED Test Administrator at the Hibbing Community College location.

AEOA ABE has a signed agreement with the Duluth ABE, Mesabi Range College – Eveleth, Itasca Community College, and Hibbing Community College (we employ the test administrator) Pearson Vue GED testing sites. The ABE Program Manager and Program Specialist II have access to GED testing information through myged.com.

Monitoring and Record Keeping of Contact and Proxy Hours

All ABE Instructors are required to keep thorough and accurate records for their class sites. Instructors will keep copies of sign in sheets and complete student files (enrollment form, assessments, PEP, Tennessen, releases) for seven years. Every year ABE Instructors are required to go through the classroom and student files and destroy files, following AEOA's Data Privacy Policy, that are over seven years old. Student assessment and attendance data is stored indefinitely in the SID data system. The AEOA ABE Program Manager, ABE Lead Instructor, and Program Specialist II will monitor SID data regularly. Additionally, the ABE Program Manager and/or ABE Lead Instructor will visit each classroom annually to complete an informal compliance visit. The compliance visit will be comprised of observation, file review, SID data review, questioning, providing feedback and offering additional training when necessary. After each informal compliance visit a follow-up email will be sent to the instructor. The letter will contain an overview of the visit including the classroom's strengths, challenges and areas for improvement. If improvement is required to meet federal, state or consortium expectations, a timeline for making any corrections will be established, training will be offered, and a subsequent visit will be scheduled to check on the progress or implementation.

AEOA ABE's performance data (especially information found in the state ABE database reports like the National Reporting System (NRS) Tables A, 4, and 4b and others) will be monitored monthly at a minimum. All relevant NRS tables (Table A, Table 4, Table 4b, Student Completion and Post-test Rates) will be reviewed in addition to other reports to assure there is no missing or incorrect data. This data will also be compared to data from previous years and sites will be informed about their performance.

If errors or patterns are found that might lead to future data inconsistencies, consortium members will be notified immediately. The consistent practice of having multiple people engaged in continuous review will help to assure accuracy.

Additional Procedures and Guidance

 The ABE Program Manager, Lead ABE Instructor, and Program Specialist II will work closely with ABE Instructors to make sure proper testing and data collection is taking place in a timely manner. When an instructor is not meeting their individual performance goal, corrective measures will be taken. The ABE Program Manager, ABE Lead Instructor, and Program Specialist II will use available data to evaluate areas of strength and challenge (hours of instruction per week, length of time students are remaining in the program/class, etc.) or adjust instructional programming to better suit the needs of their learners. Every 4-8 weeks the "Class Assessments" report will be run for each individual class to see which students have completed Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) and who still needs to do so. Once these lists have been generated for each class students with 40+ instructional hours will be tested in the subject/s they are receiving instruction. Subsequently the following tables will be monitored to check performance data: Table 4, Table 4b, and Student Completions and Post-test Rates. Instructors at all sites will be continuously aware of which students have yet to complete an EFL for the current reporting year.