

Minnesota Adult Basic Education (ABE) Professional Development (PD) System

Mission: To foster practitioner development and enhance the professionalism of Minnesota ABE

MN ABE PD System

Last year, over 1,200 ABE practitioners served more than 78,000 adult basic education students. To ensure high quality teaching and the delivery of evidence-based programming, Minnesota ABE has a robust professional development system that trains these teachers, administrators, and support staff. This system is coordinated by the state ABE PD specialist, who works with a team of regional PD coordinators, the ATLAS (Adult Teaching and Learning Advancement System) PD center at Hamline University, and a variety of other PD providers. These organizations provide training and PD in a number of key areas, including literacy, math, and English language instruction; assessment; educational technology; learning and other disabilities; distance learning; and volunteer tutor training.

Data-Driven Planning & PD Standards

A data-driven planning process is used to identify PD needs and set priorities for each year. Professional development activities are aligned to the MN ABE PD standards, which emphasize research-based features of effective professional development – longer-term, job-embedded activities with opportunities for collaborative participation and the application of new knowledge and skills. Evaluation of outcomes, especially evidence of teacher change and quality of implementation of new knowledge and skills, is integrated into every initiative to ensure the effectiveness of PD activities.

Key PD Initiatives

- Transitions to Post-secondary Training and Employment: Practitioners throughout the state receive ongoing professional development on how to effectively prepare ABE students for further education and careers.
- STAR (STudent Achievement in Reading): Over 100 teachers have participated in this very successful project from the national Office of Vocational and Adult Education, providing training and support for teachers of intermediate-level adult readers in effective, evidence-based practices in adult reading instruction.
- MN Numeracy Initiative (MNI): MNI provides training and support to increase the confidence of teachers and improve effectiveness of math instruction for adult learners through a combination of face-to-face and online training. The use of online PD is an efficient way to reach out to teachers across MN.
- Adult ESL: Nearly 50% of adult learners enrolled are in need of English language instruction. To ensure the quality and effectiveness of ESL teaching, a 2-day Adult ESL institute is held at Hamline University each year. In addition, materials are being piloted to improve teaching of low-literate adult learners (those who do not read in their first language) and PD continues to assist teachers with combining language instruction with career and work readiness.
- Project IDEAL (Improving Distance Education for Adult Learners): A cohort of teachers and administrators is participating in online professional development through the national Project IDEAL consortium. The focus of their work this year is the development and implementation of distance learning plans for their programs.
- ABE Program Support Staff PD: ABE Support staff receive training and development in customer service, accountability requirements, assessments, using data systems, and effective use of technology.

For more information:

MN ABE: <http://mnabe.themlc.org>

ATLAS: www.hamline.edu/atlas