**Southeast ABE Consortium Narrative**

**Section Two: Program and Student Accountability**

**2.1  In adherence with the ABE Contact Hour Policy, explain how student contact hours are recorded and verified for intake, orientation, assessment, daily attendance, distance learning and any other allowable time. Refer to Document F in your explanation, the student attendance sheet example.**

SE ABE student contact hours are recorded in compliance with the Minnesota Department of Education established [Student Contact Hour Policy](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance).

The Consortium uses MABE software to collect, track, and analyze student contact hours. Student hours and information are collected and reported by program sites Austin, Albert Lea, Faribault, Owatonna and Winona. Triton and Pathways to Success student data is transmitted to Owatonna for recording by our Consortium Data Manager. The Consortium Data Manager reviews data entry through monthly desk audits for all sites to verify accuracy and consistency, provides training and updates to program site personnel and provides on-call support to each of our program sites.

Program sites are responsible for appropriately documenting contact hours as per SE ABE Contact Hour Policy (create hyperlink). This policy identifies approved sources of student contact hours which include intake and orientation, classes, distance learning, tutoring sessions, navigation and lab activities. Consortium policy and practice is archived in a new google drive site that allows site leadership, support and instructional staff to access the most current information for managing student data. The SE ABE Governing Board meets six times a year and provides agenda time to review current policies with changing practice/direction from MDE. As changes become known, consortium information is updated and program site staff notified that new information is available to them for implementation in their work.

**Intake/Orientation/Assessment:**

A typical experience for a SE ABE student is to be welcomed at a program site by intake personnel. Students are given an opportunity to talk about their learning needs, after which intake staff communicate options both within our learning centers and within our respective communities. Once students make a decision to attend an ABE program, the actual intake process begins. An NRS compliant registration form (hyperlink to Attachment G) is used for all student intakes. Winona and Austin have customized registration forms for their program sites, with Austin using a modified registration for for the SPARKS Program. (create link to both Winona/Austin registration forms and the SPARKS Program registration form.)

Hyperlink to Attachments E - load up a template for a student contract.

The student contract includes the student’s Personal Education Plan and additional program-related goals. When a student’s approximate level is determined after the intake and interview process, the appropriate CASAS or TABE assessment is administered by the intake person. This score is used to determine what level of ABE programming is appropriate and how it relates to the learner’s goals. Each program site may manage the student assessment data differently. All sites discuss the results of the assessment with the student and propose a course of study, most often by a classroom teacher or a Navigator on sites where this service is available. This is also the point at which a Personal Education Plan (hyperlink to Attachment H) is created.

The student contract has become increasingly important to all SE ABE program sites. This document and the conversation around it with students, helps students make a commitment to their learning by understanding the pre/post assessment process, the importance of consistent attendance to their level gains and the need to communicate with staff as their learning needs or availability change.

**Daily Attendance:**

All program sites designate either support staff or classroom instructors to take daily attendance. Class rosters Attachment F. (hyperlink)are printed from MABE and used to sign students into classrooms in most instances. In a few of our classrooms, our teachers use their MABE portal to record daily attendance directly. Program sites as responsible for assuring that all new ABE learners understand the importance of recording their attendance as part of the orientation process. Typically, each program site also has a second-level of review of student attendance to ensure that time is closely monitored and accurately collected for daily/weekly input into MABE software. Staff members verify sign-ins by conducting head counts and reconciling as appropriate. It is staff responsibility to ensure that student attendance is documented and monitored for accuracy. All program sites likewise have daily exit monitoring for students to ensure accurate accounting of time spent on-site, on-task in learning activities.

**Allowable Student Contact Hours**

Student hours are counted for the following programming in accordance with the ABE Contact Hour Policy (hyperlink):

* Intake/Orientation/Assessment--Hours are recorded on the monthly hours sheet according to student sign in and out times. Data is entered into MABE weekly.
* Personal Education Plan--This time is normally included in the orientation and intake hours as time spent discussing the Student Contract, which includes goals and the amount of time the student would like to spend in the program.
* Daily Attendance--All teachers keep record of daily attendance on sign-in sheets.
* Supervised Open Lab
* Distance Learning—The [MDE Distance Learning Policy](http://mnabe-distancelearning.org/approved-dl-platforms) is the official practice for documenting all eligible contact hours earned through on-line programming.

Contact hours are calculated according to the proxy hour guidelines for the specific distance learning programs represented in the state policy and managed by staff members trained in those programs. Special attention is given to ensuring that students using distance learning embedded in classroom instruction are not double-counted as contact hours. Program data specialists at each site monitor distance learning hours on a monthly basis for entry into MABE.

**2.2  What is your program quality/accountability plan for main fiscal agent sites and all sub-grantees?**

1. **How does the fiscal agent ensure that the ABE consortium and all its sub-grantees are in compliance with federal and state ABE law, policy, and guidance?**

The annual SE ABE Consortium Operating Agreement (hyperlink to Attachment O) is signed by each of the Consortium’s partner districts. The agreement details roles, responsibilities and expectations for member partners, and specifically includes the annual ABE Program Grant Assurances as a part of the signature document. The following districts are currently charter partners and are regarded as subgrantees of the Consortium: Pathways to Success, Faribault ABE, Albert Lea ABE, Austin ABE, Owatonna ABE, and Winona ABE. Triton ABE is our newest subgrantee and is completing their second and final year of conditional independent program status as a subgrantee. Additionally, SE ABE has 10 aligned districts that do not host program sites, nor carry subgrantee status. SE ABE does not have central management for any task other than fiscal management, which makes having a detailed Operating Agreement and well-trained program sites important to our compliance initiatives. We work through questions or challenges to compliance on an individual basis with operating partners as they arise through either our fiscal accountability processes or our student data monitoring.

Each site receives funding specific to the contact hours earned in the year previous, population, LED population and Non-Diploma numbers as reported through census. A spreadsheet is prepared showing the estimated fiscal resources each site will have for the year and updated monthly until the final grant allocation is verified by MDE. The decision to not create a layer of consortium leadership for managing purposes was made in 1999 at the time Tri-Point Futures was originated. Tri-Point Futures merged with Faribault and Pathway to Success Consortiums in 2011. The Tri-Point Leadership model was maintained as a cornerstone of the new organizational structure. While the ownous for accountability does fall on the consortium fiscal agent, Owatonna Public Schools subgratees are reticent in their desire to apply financial resources to program plans targeted to each community’s unique learner needs. Physical distance has prohibited shared resources in the past, however, consortium professional development efforts and technology have allowed program site instruction to be linked and shared in ways that have minimized distance and lack of critical student mass.

Payments metered to Owatonna as the fiscal host are in-turn metered to subgrantees in the target window of 30 days from receipt. Subgrantees are responsible for all program expenditures incurred by their program site. 20% of state and federal dollars owed to each subgrantee are withheld by the fiscal agent pending verification of expenditures equaling the annual entitlement. Partners provide a full accounting of their funds by November 1st of each year to the fiscal agent, which will result in being eligible for the final 10% payment as it is released by the Minnesota Department of Education.

As UFARS coding changes are communicated from the Owatonna Public School Business Office, information is passed along between Directors of Community Education and local business office managers. Business managers frequently network amongst themselves for detail clarification as needed.

**2. How often is the consortium’s performance data monitored (especially information found in the state ABE database reports like the National Reporting System (NRS) Tables A, 4, and 4b and others)?**

The SE ABE Governing Board is primarily comprised of Site ABE Coordinators and their Directors of Community Education. They meet six times a year. Each of their Governing Board Meetings contains agenda time to review data both from the site and consortium level. This is time well-spent ensuring that site leadership fully understands what the data is and is not, and important benchmarks to monitor closely between Governing Board meetings. Site Coordinators return to their sites and communicate updates with their site support and instructional staff. Program sites typically meet monthly to communication performance data updates. NRS information is also shared annually at the SE ABE Annual Meeting and Professional Development Day. Staff at all but one site, are given ‘read-only’ privileges in MABE, with the expectation to review student data on a regular basis.

**3. How is the program performance data monitored at the agency-, site-, teacher-, and/or class-levels?**

NRS performance data is regularly monitored by local Site ABE Coordinators and support staff on a weekly basis. This data is shared with teachers and other support staff when relevant and necessary, generally in 4-6 week intervals. Student testing information is examined weekly to determine when a student has reached the 40-hour threshold for post-testing.

**4. How and when do you share and communicate your NRS outcome and enrollment data with other staff and stakeholders?**

Local program sites meet every 4-6 weeks in combined instructional and support staff roles to progress monitor student performance using MRS outcome data. Local workforce centers receive weekly or monthly attendance and performance data as required specific to individual students mandated into learning centers. Local Board of Education and Community Education Advisory Councils receive performance reports through monthly, quarterly and annual presentations on Community education program accountability. MnSCU and local business partners receive data as targeted, partner-based programs cycle through planning, deployment and evaluations phases of community-based initiatives.

**5. How has the consortium implemented the ABE Student Progress Policy? If this is addressed in your assessment or attendance policy, please refer to the policy and page number.**

The State ABE Non-Progress Policy requires that:

* Students must demonstrate a Student Proficiency Level (SPL) change on a CASAS or TABE assessment within a program year.
* After 2 years of non-progress, a student is not eligible for State ABE funding and will be referred permanently to other community agencies.

Local program sites identifies any students who have attended 24 months without a level gain. These students are placed on an individualized intervention plan to encourage their progress and success. The plan is executed over the course of 6 months and includes an agreed upon description of the actions (Document C, page 2) that are to be taken by the student and teacher. Actions may include a behavioral contract, consultation with ABE Supplemental Service Provider, navigation services, local agency referral, and/or individualized tutoring. If, at the end of the 6-month period, there has been no level gain, referral to another agency for services will likely be recommended.

**2.3  In what roles do you use volunteers in your program (i.e. instruction, teaching assistance, intake, goal-setting, assessment, data entry, etc.)?**

Volunteers are used to support instruction in nearly all of our local program sites. Volunteers work alongside licensed staff as classroom assistants to provide targeted and extended services to address identified learner needs. Volunteers are trained using state approved volunteer tutoring programs like Minnesota Literacy Council and the Austin ABE (Document I hyperlink) approved programs.

1. **How do you orient and train potential volunteers in your consortium for these roles? (Can refer to Document I)**

SE ABE adheres to the Minnesota Department of Education Volunteer Training Standards for all volunteers in our programs. (hyperlink) Volunteers must complete a [Volunteer Application](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bENHbXFNZVUCG9gWTqxJ46TBgB9OUjAj7dCgMODL-j4/edit?usp=sharing) (new hyperlink to SE ABE form) form and undergo a background check through their local public school. Once approved, an interview will be held where the individual’s strengths and abilities are assessed. A day of observation is asked of the volunteer to get a better idea of the program structure and where that individual sees him/herself in support of student learning. Once a preference is established, the instructor(s) is/are then consulted and provided with guidance on how to best utilize the volunteer’s strengths. Before beginning in the classroom, the volunteer is encouraged to participate in the [MLC Online Volunteer Training](http://online.themlc.org/) course, or the approved Austin Program. Upon completion, a volunteer will begin assisting in the classroom.

**2.    What training do you provide on an ongoing basis for volunteers in the**

**consortium? (In adherence to the Volunteer Training Standards Policy at**

[**www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance**](http://www.mnabe.org/program-management/law-policy-guidance)**.)**

Each of the ABE sites provide the initial and any additional training that is considered beneficial to the volunteer. The primary tool utilized is the [MLC Online Volunteer Training](http://online.themlc.org/) (new hyperlink needed), and volunteers are also encouraged to sign up for the MLC Volunteer weekly email updates. In addition, volunteers are embraced as a part of the staff in that they are invited to all staff meetings in order to stay up to date with program changes. Occasionally volunteers are available to attend the SE ABE Consortium Annual Meeting or Regional Trainings.

**Documents:**

The following attached documents are foundational to SE ABE Consortium’s accountability for highly effective programming. Policies are modeled after MDE provided templates. They are developed through the consensus building model utilized by the SE ABE Governing Board. The Board annually reviews policies as MDE ABE Specialists alert the field that new requirements are forthcoming. Once reviewed and approved at the Governing Board level, local site coordinators are responsible for ensuing local support and instructional staff are trained and implementing policies. This action has a direct translation to student awareness through the student registration and intake process, as well as periodic student/teacher conferences and interactions.

New in 2016 will be the creation of a Google Drive, specific to SE ABE. This site will host our current narrative, Consortium Governing Board agendas and minutes, Annual Operating Agreement, fiscal reports, current narrative with associated policies and documents and a special section for sharing of course descriptions, smart board instructional lessons, and instructional supports such as CCRS Standards, ACES/TIF, Learners Web, online resources, New Teacher Orientation, and all other documents pertinent to the needs of the member districts.

Local site orientation for new staff, both support and instructional, will include time to review and explore this google drive as the premier search for needed information relevant to their position. The drive will also include a directory of consortium staff, now numbering approximately 40 individuals, inclusive of their primary assignment so like positions can network and communicate to improve their professional effectiveness.

[Document B: Student Orientation and Intake Policy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/15Bzn56rleDKltIpOsiSpu98Avc0bOgFCCX3wPlVDy2c/edit?usp=sharing)

[Document C: Assessment Policy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WiXWbuawmag12xMoG0JgfQPAqXvHQgHEeldFKCTznec/edit?usp=sharing)

[Document D: Student Attendance Policy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gJKt6aVVLWckTEpkP3oIy9Dv69cY0GP5dzK8xCd0RRo/edit?usp=sharing)

**Additional Documents:**

[Document E: Student Attendance Contract](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rkTvJkXotHMB2xc4mvFSE624Hw_57tlzUfzxklEZmlk/edit?usp=sharing)

[Document F: Daily Attendance Sheet](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B36V8QzbUtLhTGpEaFk1QWxXa1NQTURKNXpETk94anJrSjlr/view?usp=sharing)

[Document G: Student Intake/Registration Form](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zAM24Bei_eCQo65zfJ78q-KVLtq0LXxjXkEoizRkzKU/edit?usp=sharing)

[Document H: Personal Education Plan](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dagNB4X2pbcJ8fPzzX3kGfjELHHzEcit2HZjnFdPAYs/edit?usp=sharing)

Document I: Volunteer Orientation and Training Plan

? [Volunteer Application](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bENHbXFNZVUCG9gWTqxJ46TBgB9OUjAj7dCgMODL-j4/edit?usp=sharing)

?[Volunteer Conduct Agreement](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1koEK6QuOchF_e1_er_kL2zPPL7Zu5IVsXMZcU3E08IE/edit?usp=sharing)

?[Volunteer Confidentiality Statement](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mlksLGpxicA9xNaO3GHyLFT2_JTXdiM7aN0YvZXdz3o/edit?usp=sharing)

?[Volunteer Interview Questions](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pFe969sCq2LzHkaBUvCDE0cWcOVkxmaEnOeih8X0Ysk/edit?usp=sharing)

Austin Volunteer Training Program