St. Paul Community Literacy Consortium Student Attendance Policy
May 2013

Policy Purpose and Rationale – The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) – Adult Basic Education (ABE) office requires that:

> ABE programs use State and Federal ABE funds to provide efficient and effective-services to the eligible ABE population within their consortium boundaries. To meet that requirement, programs must implement effective outreach activities and, once students are enrolled, engage students in programming that is of sufficient intensity and duration for students to achieve their goals.

SPCLC programs strive to provide quality ABE programming to all eligible ABE learners. We expect learners to attend regularly, actively participate, complete assigned work, and test regularly to assess their progress. SPCLC programs take the following measures and enforce the following attendance policies.

Evaluate Current Trends
- SPCLC members will use data from NRS Tables A, classroom attendance reports and enrollment trends to analyze the attendance rates of students.
- SPCLC members will target efforts to improve retention on those groups of students with the lowest attendance rates.

Recruitment and Outreach Methods
- Word of mouth has traditionally been the best publicity method for SPCLC members. SPCLC members also receive many referrals from MFIP job counselors. If resources allow for additional student instruction, recruitment and outreach will be augmented with increased visibility efforts such as flyers in targeted locations, advertisements in local publications, outreach meetings with appropriate organizations, and other relevant means. Many programs also have websites with class and registration information.
- SPCLC is currently unveiling a combined marketing plan that will seek to create a recognizable "brand" of SPCLC members throughout St. Paul. Please section 5.2 (page ??) for more information about the SPCLC marketing plan.

Attendance Policy
Learners are advised of their responsibility for regular attendance and communication at intake.

Learners are responsible for being in attendance on a regular basis and for getting to class on time. Learners are also expected to communicate with their teachers if they need to miss class. If a student's attendance is inconsistent, below 60% or if they are absent for up to two weeks without contacting their teacher, they will be dropped from the program. To return to school, learners must re-register and may need to take a test.

If a student has poor attendance program staff will attempt to contact students to ascertain the reason for absence. Continuing non-attendance leads to staff dropping students from class rosters using the MABE system.

Students who have no attendance for 30 days or more are then exited from the MABE system.

Student Attendance Contract
Each SPCLC member creates their own student attendance contracts/expectation forms (see attached examples).

Retention Strategies at Registration
At orientation and when creating the student's schedule students learn about and discuss the attendance expectations in the program. Included in this discussion are many points intended to improve retention of students such as:
- Roadblocks and barriers to good attendance and how to work through these.
- Goals and how attending school regularly will help students reach these goals.
- Requirements for notifying teachers of absences and notifying the school of any longer term attendance issues.

Retention Strategies in the Classroom
Teachers have the most contact with learners and their efforts around helping with retention issues are the most effective. These include:
- Appropriate goal setting and class placement.
- Meaningful instruction that assists learners in reaching their goals.
- Building respectful and welcoming environments.
- Building respectful relationships.
- Improving customer service.
- Personal communication with learners who have not shown adequate attendance.
- Communication with learners on a regular basis about the importance of continuing education to reach their academic and work-based goals.
- Personalized problem-solving around barriers to retention.
- Referral to specialized services (such as counseling resources) to deal with barriers to retention.
- For MFIP students, communicating with job counselors concerning absences.
- Managed enrollment policies which foster a cohort in the classroom.

MDE-ABE Learner Progress Policy
SPCLC members each run the "Student non-Progress Report" regularly to find the students who have been attending close to two years without a level gain. Students are then put on an improvement plan and if no improvement is made after 6 more months they are referred out, to other programming that will more adequately meet their needs.

Regularly Review Data with Consortium Partners and Stakeholders
NRS data is regularly reviewed at monthly Governance and Executive Committee meetings. SPCLC discussions generally deal with 'macro' issues, such as experiences with new refugee groups, the impact of MFIP/TANF regulations, etc. Generally, individual providers are responsible for reviewing their own attendance data, with their review informed by SPCLC discussions.

Update Agreements with Workforce Centers and Partners – Build Referral Networks
 SPCLC continues to work to sustain, enhance, and build referral networks with partners such as Saint Paul Public Schools Alternative Learning Centers, and Placement Center; area WorkForce Centers; MFIP providers; area MnSCU schools such as Saint Paul College, and non-providers service providers such as TRIO programs and HIRED.

Using the MIS Data to Monitor Student Attendance and Retention
Administrators
- Review attendance trends; compare trends to previous year's data.
- Respond to attendance trends by adjusting class offerings, classroom capacity, increased recruitment or maintenance of wait-list.
- Create program policy and programming directions based on data.
- Communicate program performance with teachers and other program staff.

Teachers or data entry staff
- Keep attendance records in MABE up-to-date on a daily or weekly basis.
- Follow-up with students with low attendance.
- Drop students from classroom roster in a timely manner.

Other Staff
- Maintain accurate and up to date student records in MABE, including student demographic data, NRS required data elements, class attendance hours, and intake and testing hours.
- Run regular reports on non-attendance and properly exit these learners.
- Assist with follow-up phone calls to learners as necessary.