



AALPD Recommended Policies to Support Professional Development for Adult Education Practitioners

Executive Summary

Goal:

The adoption of policies at national, state and local levels that adequately support the participation of adult basic education, adult ESOL, and adult secondary education practitioners (including paraprofessionals and learner leaders who are staff members) in professional development that will help them be effective teachers, tutors, counselors, and administrators. These policies offer recommendations for the *minimum* necessary to support practitioners in getting the professional development they need to do their jobs well.

Policies:

1. Orientation/Induction for Teachers New to Adult Education: All teachers new to adult education should have an orientation to teaching in the field of adult basic education within at least the first six months of their teaching.
2. Expectations for Participation in Professional Development: Every state and program should expect that all practitioners, no matter how experienced, will continue professional learning throughout their careers. Teachers should have access to up-to-date knowledge of research and teaching methods in the content areas they are required to teach (e.g. ABE reading, ESOL reading math) as well as general methods of adult teaching and learning.
3. Professional Development Plans: Each program should be funded a minimum of 0.5% (up to 8 hours) of its annual staff hours to support teachers in developing an annual professional development plan that begins with a practitioner needs assessment and dovetails with its program improvement process. All teachers should have PD plans, and programs should be monitored to see that these are real and meaningful to teachers and to the program.
4. Paid Professional Development Release Time: Each program should be funded such that all practitioners receive a minimum of 2.5% of their annual working

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time as paid professional development.¹ Paid professional development includes any professional learning activity (group or individual) that advances practitioners towards achieving the goals outlined in their professional development plans.

5. Participation in Program Improvement: Each program should be funded a minimum of 2% of its annual staff hours for teachers to participate and take leadership in program improvement. Teachers should be encouraged to collectively review standardized test data and classroom or program-based assessment data for program improvement purposes and participate in other program improvement activities such as informing program policies, designing a new curriculum or assessments (not just lesson planning), improving recruiting, or designing a new student orientation.
6. Participation in the Field of Adult Education: All full-time practitioners should be funded for at least 1% of their annual working time to participate in activities as a member of the field (ultimately to improve the quality of programs and services), including:
 - ◆ providing professional development to other teachers inside or outside of the program,
 - ◆ working towards addressing students' needs (transportation, child care, health services, job assistance, etc.) that may prevent students from participating in the program,
 - ◆ building community partnerships (with the health care system, K-12 system, libraries, local businesses, career centers, etc.) to improve services to adult learners, and
 - ◆ informing state adult education policies and state initiatives.
7. Teachers' Working Conditions: In addition to paid professional development time, programs should have sufficient resources to provide working conditions that will allow teachers to stay in the field, find the work satisfying, and grow professionally, including:
 - ◆ Adequate teacher salaries²
 - ◆ benefits for all teachers (including part-time),
 - ◆ access to full-time employment,
 - ◆ paid prep time for all teachers (including part-time),

¹ e.g., A full-time teacher, working 40 hours a week at 40 weeks a year – summers and holidays off – would work 1600 hours a year, so 2.5% would equal 40 hours of paid professional development a year -- equivalent to 5 paid days).

² ABE teachers should be paid the equivalent salary earned by K-12 full and part time professionals in the ABE teacher's city or county of employment. Pay should be more than what the city/county pays a substitute teacher.

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- ◆ paid access for all teachers to at least one hour a week of professional sharing time with either colleagues or a coordinator who supports their teaching, and
 - ◆ at least monthly mechanisms (staff meetings, meetings with director) for voicing their ideas and participating in decisions about the program.
8. Tuition Reimbursement: Programs should be funded to provide tuition reimbursement at the equivalent of one college course per semester to teachers who have higher education attainment as a part of their professional development plans.
 9. Performance Evaluation and Professional Improvement: Programs should conduct performance evaluations of practitioners, who should show evidence of achievement, including: application of learning and reflection, or acquisition of new skills and knowledge, as described in the goals of their professional development plans. The performance evaluation results should be used to inform practitioners' future PD planning.
 10. Professional Development System: Each state should have a funded state literacy resource center or other agency that provides direct professional development to practitioners *and* technical assistance to help programs organize in-house professional development. A person should be designated in each program and paid to be the (most often part-time) coordinator of program and professional development.
 11. Balance between State-driven and Teacher-Driven Professional Development: Every state literacy resource center or professional development system/agency and every program should use the professional development plans of the practitioners in their state or program and/or use needs assessments (in which teachers, administrators, and adult learners have participated) to plan professional development activities relevant to and driven by teachers' and (ultimately) students' needs. The needs for professional development as defined by practitioners and adult learners, as well as the needs for program improvement, should be evenly balanced with the needs of the state ABE regulating agency/ies.
 12. Access to Professional Development Activities: The state literacy resource center or statewide professional development agency/system should have the mandate and funding to ensure that every practitioner (new and experienced, part-time and full-time) has access to professional development, throughout the year, both inside and outside of his/her program, and that every practitioner has access to a variety of types of professional development (conferences, workshops, study circles, courses, teacher research and other forms of more sustained PD, etc.)

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with a variety of content, organized at a variety of times and locations, including on-line options.

13. Quality of Professional Development: Full-time facilitators of professional development should complete an annual plan for organizing and delivering professional development, based on discussions with and needs assessments of practitioners and adult learners. Professional developers should be funded to stay grounded in the field, such as spending a minimum of 2% of their time each year teaching in the ABE/ESOL classroom. States should also have an on-going formative evaluation system for gauging how well the PD system is reaching and serving all adult basic education practitioners and program directors.
14. Adult Learner Voice in Professional Development: The state professional development agency and each individual program should have dedicated funding to ensure that adult learners' voices are included in developing professional development policies and in delivering professional development at the local program, state, and federal levels.
15. Professional Development for Learner Leaders Who Work in the Field: Current or former students who are tutors, administrators, program coordinators, and counselors, should have access to professional development offered by state professional development and technical assistance agencies, given additional PD to meet their needs if necessary, and/ or granted internships to work and learn within the program.
16. Data Collection Regarding Teacher Characteristics: In addition to using the professional development plans of practitioners to make decisions about professional development offerings, states should collect data each year about the characteristics of their teachers that would enable them to determine a schedule of professional development that would reach the largest number of practitioners with appropriate professional development opportunities. Data should include:
 - ◆ the experience level of practitioners (years in the field);
 - ◆ the type of teaching or population of students they teach (GED, ESOL, etc.);
 - ◆ the times, days and months during the year that practitioners would prefer to attend PD;
 - ◆ preferred types or models of PD in which they would be willing to participate (workshops, study circles, practitioner research, conferences, etc.);
 - ◆ number of hours, annually, of paid professional development they receive (from the state or from the program); and
 - ◆ practitioners' current addresses and/or e-mail (for keeping them abreast of PD opportunities).

The total for all policies that indicate % funding allocations is 6% of the salary of a full-time teacher.