



Statement Regarding ABE Programming for Summer 2020

May 19, 2020

On May 15, Governor Walz signed [Executive Order 20-57](#), which directs the Commissioner of Education to allow for a safe and effective summer learning environment for all Minnesota students. On the same date, the Minnesota Department of Education provided the [Minnesota Summer Programming Guidance for Schools](#) which outlines guidelines and requirements for districts and charters regarding summer learning. This guidance, on pg. 15, refers specifically to Adult Basic Education programs. In addition, the Minnesota Department of Health released the [Guidance for Social Distancing in Youth and Student Programs](#), which outlines the public health requirements and recommendations for summer programming.

Based on Executive Order 20-57 and the MDE guidance, the Minnesota Department of Education-Adult Basic Education (ABE) team provides the following additional guidance to all Minnesota ABE providers.

ABE providers in Minnesota have three options for summer programming starting at the end of the 19-20 school year, but no sooner than June 1:

1. Continue to provide ABE programming using a distance-only education model.
2. Begin providing ABE programming using a hybrid model that combines in-person programming with distance education.
3. Use both of these approaches, depending on the student population, site, or other factors.

The main goal of hybrid programming is to help ABE programs deliver ABE services in a more equitable way to all ABE students in the communities they serve, while still following public health guidelines that will limit the spread of COVID-19.

Safety Considerations for Hybrid Programming

ABE providers that choose options 2 or 3 above must follow all public health guidelines for in-person programming, as outlined in the MDH guidance: [Guidance for Social Distancing in Youth and Student Programs](#). Some of the key factors included in that guidance are maintaining 6 feet between all people at all times; maintaining no more than a 1:9 staff to student ratio (and a smaller ratio in spaces that don't allow for 6 feet of space between 10 people); establishing a regular cleaning routine for desks, equipment and materials; promoting the use of cloth masks; and minimizing the use of community supplies, such as writing utensils. Providers should be sure to read the MDH guidance thoroughly and plan carefully and strategically to create the safest programming space possible.

It is also important to keep in mind the following statement from [Executive Order 20-57](#): “Nothing in this Executive Order should be construed to encourage or require Minnesotans in at-risk categories to act inconsistently with public health recommendations or the advice of their doctors.” This applies to ABE students, staff and volunteers. All students should have the opportunity to access distance-only education if they prefer, especially if they or a family member are in an at-risk category. ABE programs should also keep in mind that staff members may have concerns regarding risk factors, and so should make staffing decisions with those concerns in mind, e.g. continuing to allow staff to work from home.

Decision-making Considerations for Summer Programming

In making the decision of what type of summer programming to offer, ABE staff are encouraged to use an equity lens by asking questions such as:

- Which students have had difficulty engaging during this period of school closure? Can we serve them more effectively using a hybrid approach?
- What barriers have made it difficult for students to access distance learning? How can hybrid programming address those barriers?
- What systems, practices and/or procedures can we build with students using a hybrid programming approach this summer that will facilitate future distance and/or hybrid learning?
- What types of programming require an in-person or face-to-face component, and how can we adapt those to follow public health guidelines?

Remember, the main goal of hybrid programming is to help ABE programs deliver ABE services in a more equitable way to all ABE students in the communities they serve, while still following public health guidelines that will limit the spread of COVID-19.

Testing Guidelines for Summer Programming

Expectations for NRS testing have been adjusted due to program closures related to COVID-19. These adjusted expectations remain in place. The COVID EFL Exemption will continue to be available within SiD, so there is currently no restriction on how many hours a student can generate before they receive a pre-test. Programs are encouraged to consider remote NRS testing as feasible, but can and should continue serving students even when administering an NRS assessment is not possible. When making decisions about whether to use in-person methods for intake and testing, programs should prioritize collecting information for instructional and placement purposes rather than testing solely for accountability purposes, such as measurable skill gains or testing rates. Keep in mind that the goal of in-person programming this summer is to allow for more equitable delivery of ABE programming.