COVID19 & ABE Programming Discussion

MDE – Adult Basic Education Staff

Staff from Literacy Action Network (LAN) and MN Distance Learning Team

Introductions

MDE Staff:

Todd Wagner, ABE State Director

Astrid Liden, Professional Development Specialist

Brad Hasskamp, Secondary Credential and Policy Specialist

Jodi Versaw, Program Quality Specialist

Julie Dincau, Transitions Specialist

Literacy Action Network and ABE Distance Learning Team members:

Susan Wetenkamp-Brandt, Senior Manager Ed Technology Literacy Minnesota and Literacy Action Network President

Tom Cytron-Hysom, ABE Distance Learning Team, consultant to Literacy Minnesota

Agenda

- MDE-ABE guidance
- Distance Learning team guidance
- Discussion

Goals in Response to COVID-19

Goals:

1. Safety of ABE students, ABE staff and our communities
2. Best possible service for ABE students throughout any program closures and disruptions
3. Support for ABE programs and staff across the field

Guidance from MDE to school districts re: ABE

"School Readiness, Early Childhood Family Education Programming

Community Education programs such as Early Childhood Family Education and School Readiness will not be required to be included in your district's distance learning plan whether these programs are included in the plan can be a locally determined decision." pg. 16

https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE032072&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary

We interpret this to mean that ABE does not have to be included in the district plan, and therefore it is up to the individual district to determine whether ABE will participate in the 2-week planning period for online learning.

Key Message from MDE and LAN on funding

The ABE team at MDE and Literacy Action Network commit to:

Work to hold all ABE consortia harmless from any decline in contact hours as a result of school closures.

Key Message in plain language

Continue to provide ABE services with as much access and quality as possible.

Don’t worry about funding.

Fiscal year 2020 funding

Reminder about current year funding:

State and Federal ABE aid have been awarded for fiscal year 2020 - this means that ABE services are funded through June 30, 2020.

Use those funds to deliver services in whatever ways are possible throughout any period of school closure.

- As possible and based on public health recommendations and guidelines, staff paid through ABE funding should continue to work and be paid for their work during this time
- Work will look different, including working remotely

Continuing to provide ABE services

Ideas to consider for how to provide services during school closure:

- Deliver ABE instruction using Skype, Zoom or another platform
- Online learning, including BUT NOT LIMITED TO currently approved distance learning platforms
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Text messages
- Snail mail (handouts, worksheets, textbooks, packets, etc.)

Building future capacity

In addition to direct service, current year funding can be used to build capacity to provide distance education in the future.

Reminder: we don’t know how long this current public health emergency will continue, and there is a possibility of future resurgence.

What might this look like for instructors?

ABE instructors paid to:

- Learn more about delivering effective instruction at a distance
- Take DL Basics online course
- Develop online learning curriculum
- Research online learning platforms
- Communicate with students to build student capacity for distance learning

What might this look like for support staff?

ABE support staff paid to:

- Take DL Basics online course
- Communicate with students to build student capacity for distance learning
- Research communication tools for use with students
- Coordinate and organize device distribution to students
- Research resources for free or inexpensive internet access for students
- Research resources for low-cost laptops or other devices for students

What might this look like for managers?

ABE managers paid to:

- Facilitate communication, collaboration and training around distance learning for ABE staff
- Facilitate collaboration and sharing with K-12 partners around distance learning
- Take DL Basics online course
- Research online learning platforms

Other ideas?

The challenge to our field

Use this year's funding to deliver services as possible AND grow your program's capacity to support ABE students in new ways.

Remember: LAN and MDE will be working to make sure you have the upcoming six weeks to do this WITHOUT being concerned about how many contact hours are generated.

Requirements and data

ABE programs must continue to comply with all state and federal law and ABE policy and guidance

- No more than 12 contact hours can be entered for a student with no pre-test

ABE Continue entering all required data, including attendance (contact hours and proxy hours) into SiD as you normally do

- Aside from funding calculations, we still need an accurate count of student hours
- Synchronous instruction to individual students or groups (e.g. via Skype, Google Hangouts or phone call) should be recorded in SiD as contact hours, not proxy hours.

Assessment and Program Improvement

We recognize:

- Closures will impact your ability to conduct post-testing
- This will impact MSGs for this year.

We commit to taking these factors into account when determining Program Improvement processes for next year.

GED Testing and Records

Limited capacity in testing centers and many closures.

Please communicate this with your students.

Limited MDE office capacity for onsite appointments for GED records; we recommend emailing records request forms.

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Expanding DL in MN ABE - a Response to COVID-19

Tom Cytron-Hysom and Susan Wetenkamp-Brandt

The challenge

Further closures of public spaces are likely.

This may affect schools and ABE programs.

Distance learning (DL) offers a way to serve students if they can’t attend class.

Seat Time at a Distance

Minnesota DL Policy allows for **synchronous online learning** via a webinar platform or similar tool.

Seat time can be counted.

Try **Zoom, Google Hangouts Meet,** or **Skype**

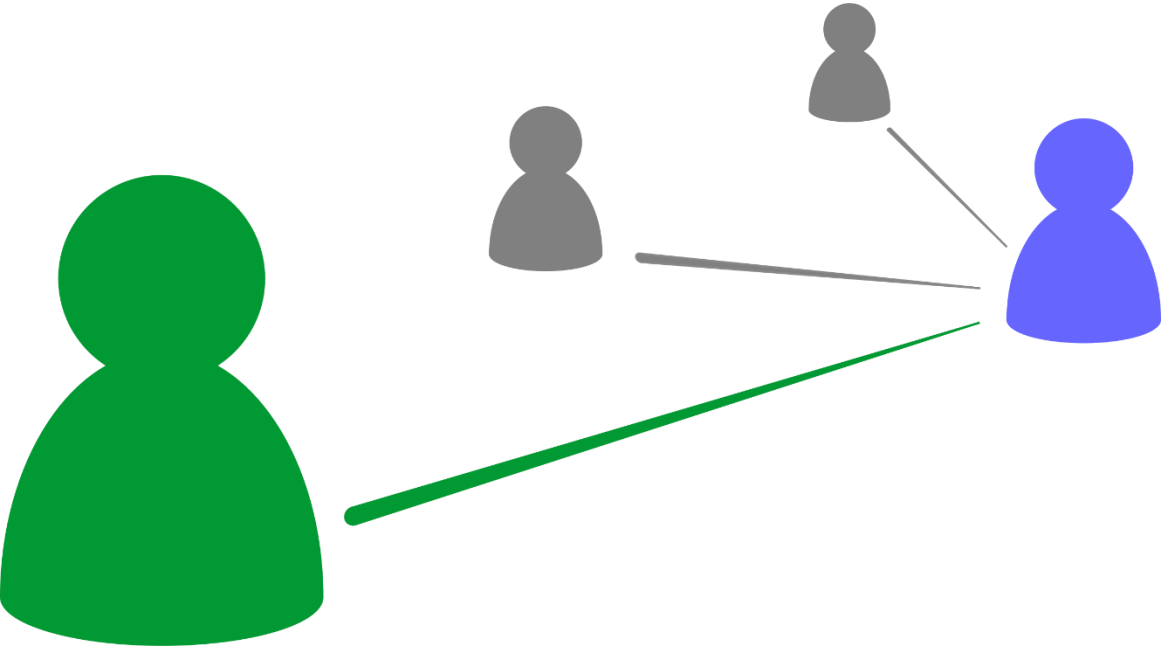
Preparing for DL Instruction - Proxy Hours

Make sure each of your students has a **working email address**, so you can communicate with them at a distance. **Text** messages are another good option.

Develop **remote working arrangements** for staff, insuring each person has adequate connectivity and access to work at home.

Insure that all teachers who may be involved in distance learning complete **DL Basics,** as per state policy

Preparing for DL - Connecting with Learners



Stay connected with students so they have good information and know when they can return to class.

Remind easily reaches large numbers of students.

- Sign students up now if you are not already using it.
- It’s also a great way to send links to online learning options!

Delivering DL

Self-paced distance learning platforms aren't a replacement for face-to-face classes.

But they are helpful, educational and important.

If you are not now using a DL platform or platforms, review those that are available.

State Provided DL Programs

All MN ABE programs have free access to Edmentum Courseware and Northstar. NS Online Learning has self-directed online instruction and practice material for **Computer Basics,** which can be used to claim time-on-task proxy hours.

There are many other approved DL platforms on the DL website, some of them free. A new filtering tool makes it easy to match approved platforms with student needs.

Sign up as many students now as you can for the platform(s) you select. **Note:** Many companies are offering reduced prices for their platforms due to the virus – check their websites for information.

Take time during class to make sure everyone knows how to access their platform(s).

http://mnabe-distancelearning.org/

Approved DL Platforms

- State Supported Platforms
- Other Platforms

Admin Platforms - Only visible to admins

Other Platforms

To filter results, select options from the lists below and then select "apply."

CASAS Score	TABE Score	Skills	Topics	Other filters
Less than 200	300-457	Critical Thinking	Accuplacer Prep	Adult Diploma
201-210	458-510	Digital Literacy	Career	CCRS
211-220	511-546	Grammer	Citizenship	Free
221-235	547-583	Listening	Civics	Mobile Friendly
236-245	584-630	Math	College Prep	Time on task
Greater than 246	631-800	Pronunciation	CTE	Unit completion

Apply Reset

- Vocabulary.com
- USA Learns
- Tooling U-SME
- Townsend Press
- Skills Tutor
- Spelling City
- Rosetta Stone

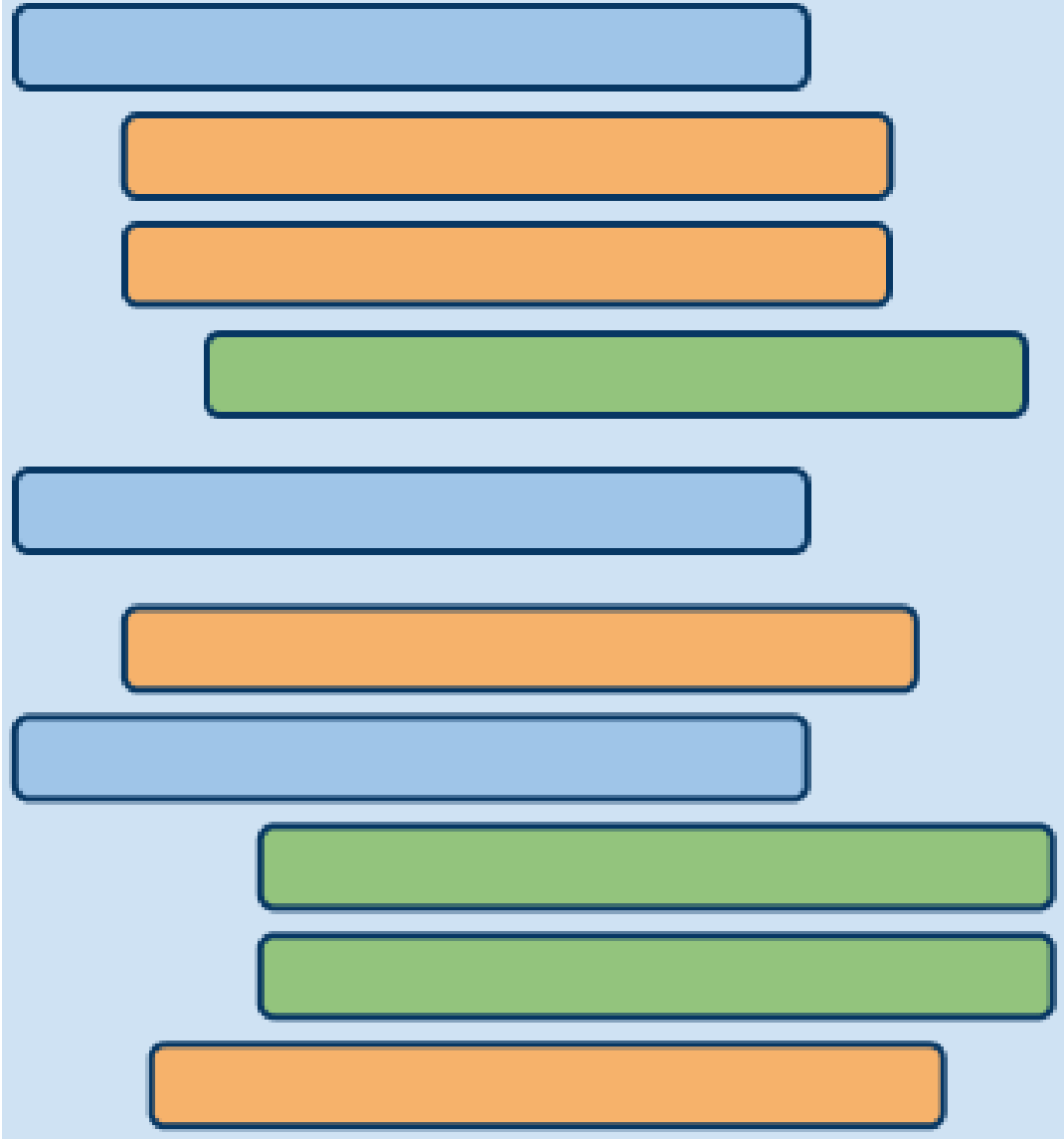
Another Consideration

DL students need **solid connections** with ABE staff.

Teachers should **monitor work closely** for distance-only students, **preferably daily**.

Contact (email, phone, text, or video chat) should happen at least **weekly**.

Formal guidance coming soon.



Learning Management Systems

Currently there is no system in place to record proxy hours for teacher-developed courses delivered through an LMS.

Nevertheless, creating a class on an LMS such as **Schoology** or **Google Classroom** is still a valuable step. These tools help you build online community among learners and keep engagement with your program high. They provide a place for learners to check in and and get links to learning materials, ask questions, and receive support.

Both Schoology and Google Classroom are free for teachers.

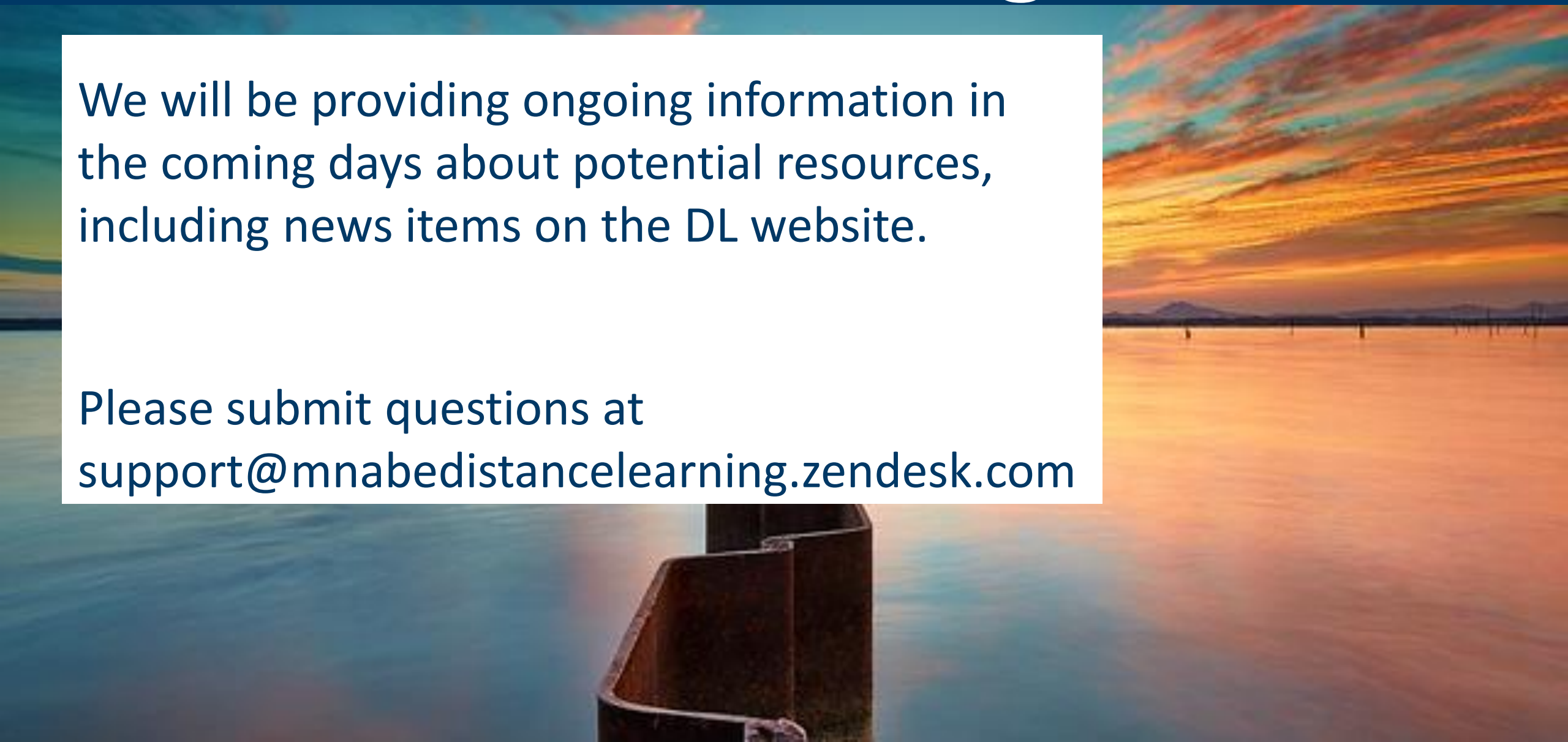
Resources

The EdTech Center@World Education made a new resource website to help ABE programs scale up or launch distance learning programs. https://edtech.worlded.org/tips-for-distance-learning/

LINCs forum

For advice, consider following discussions in the LINCS Community of Practice, specifically the Integrating Technology group. To ask questions about some of these issues join LINCS. Then join the Integrating Technology group.

Looking Forward



We will be providing ongoing information in the coming days about potential resources, including news items on the DL website.

Please submit questions at support@mnabedistancelearning.zendesk.com

A Note on Scams

Coronavirus-related scams are multiplying at a terrifying rate.

Our students, with limited English and/or low basic skills, are vulnerable.

The Federal Trade Commission has created a dedicated web page at https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/coronavirus-scams-what-ftc-doing with information about current scams and guidance on avoiding them.

The material could be used directly with intermediate-level readers, or adapted for those at more beginning levels. You can also subscribe to receive alerts and updates.

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Discussion and Questions

Web Check-in:
Thursday Mar 19
3:30 – 4:30