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Karla Vien

Literacy Action Network

700 Raymond Ave., Suite 180
St. Paul, MN 55114

info@literacyactionnetwork.org

www.literacyactionnetwork.org

MEMO 4/6/20

To: Chair Davnie and Members of the House Education Finance Division

From: Tom Cytron-Hysom and Sherry Munyon,
On Behalf of Literacy Action Network

Regarding: DE10, Article 2, Subd. 6 – Adult basic education aid

On behalf of Literacy Action Network (LAN), we would like to express strong support for language submitted that allows full payment of adult basic 5.11 education aid so that it does not fall below the amount estimated for the 2020-2021 fiscal year based on the February 2020 forecast. This is crucial in allowing the full functioning of ABE in 2021, when the Minnesota economy begins to recover.

Currently, ABE is in the midst of a massive effort to convert services to an online format while programs cannot operate in-person. However, due to the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, it is likely that overall contact hours may decrease somewhat this year. At the same time, based on previous experience during the 2008-10 recession, we expect very rapid increases during early FY 2021 in students seeking services due to unemployment.

Without the full forecast allocation, ABE will be unable to meet these rising needs. If this occurs, there will be a negative impact as Minnesota struggles to improve economically with many persons unable to improve the basic skills needed to cope with changing job requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.