

National Coalition for Literacy – 2017 Literacy Leadership Awards – Acceptance Remarks

It is such an honor to accept this award on behalf of ATLAS. I'm the Director, Patsy Egan, and I'm joined by the ATLAS Operations Manager, Marisa Geisler.

While we are here in person, this award for ATLAS's service to adult education in Minnesota and to the field of ABE belongs to a long, long list of people.

We are housed at Hamline University in St. Paul, and 10 years ago, ATLAS began as a 2 person staff by its founders, Kim Johnson and Betsy Parrish, funded by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. Together with Astrid Liden at the state office, ATLAS found its footing, and thankfully we quickly found Marisa, and from here we began offering professional development to Minnesota's ABE workforce.

To this day, we continue to be solely funded by the Minnesota Department of Education, using state and federal funds, and we cannot thank them enough for their unwavering support over the years. From entrusting our founders and our generous home at Hamline University with the initial grant in 2007, not knowing quite what shape it would take, to the many (MANY) growing initiatives we are able to offer, Minnesota Department of Education's ABE office has given ATLAS the autonomy, guidance, and resources to design and implement excellent professional development. We thank them for trusting us with this important work.

As a professional development provider, we dwell in a complex 'third space' between the state office's vision for ABE and the practitioners in classrooms throughout the state. From standards implementation to the Minnesota numeracy initiative, from our Transitions Integration Framework to Student Achievement in Reading, we are able to continually invite Minnesota's ABE practitioners to become ever more skilled at their craft.

In fact, it is these practitioners across the state that make ATLAS a strong professional development provider. While our ATLAS staff itself is small, we prioritize bringing in a large number of teacher-leaders to serve on our advisory teams, to present workshops, facilitate study circles and online courses, and to develop and share new resources for teachers.

Whenever we sit down to think through a new offering, be it a job-embedded year-long cohort, a newsletter article, or a new workshop topic, the first question is always: **"Who knows more about this than we do, and how could we work together?"** That's worth saying again -- *Who knows more about this than we do, and how could we work together?* Without this relationship to the work at hand, we could not do what needs to be done for adult education. When we approach our work with this curious and collaborative stance, extraordinary leaders and experts emerge. This is a joy to see and to be a part of.

This award means so much to us. I'd like to thank Silja at World Education for our nomination and the National Coalition for Literacy's Board of Directors for this award. It is truly an honor to stand among our distinguished fellow recipients.

Thank you all for the work that you do for literacy and education nationwide.

*Patsy Egan, ATLAS Program Director
October 4, 2017*