

Retired ABE Manager Tips

1. Be connected and visible in your school district and community; remind local administrators, related service agencies, and potential outside funders of the importance of ABE services, teachers, and students.
2. Establish and foster relationships with your school district's VIPs, MDE-ABE staff, supplemental service providers, and other ABE program managers. Network (even if not natural) and share chocolate.
3. Follow the rules – even if you disagree. Make your opinions known and lobby for change, but still follow the rules.
4. Surround yourself with good people. Connect with ABE managers or coordinators – the greatest group of professionals you will ever work with – and do not hesitate to ask for their support, advice, good ideas, guidance, clarification, assurance, comfort, and friendship.
5. Hire qualified staff, let them do their jobs, and watch your program grow. Do not micro-manage – it does not benefit you, your program, or your staff. Delegate often because teamwork leads to greater achievement.
6. Lead by example: *Always* keep the lines of communication open. *Always* keep everyone informed. *Always* listen to staff's ideas, insights, and concerns. *Always* give credit. *Always* say thank you.
7. Be friendly, curious, talk and listen to staff even when there *is not* a problem or crisis. Be aware of their different learning styles or personalities and try to balance their strengths and weaknesses.
8. Do not make promises that you cannot keep. Be honest with staff about what's doable, affordable, etc.
9. Attend and send staff to as much professional development as fiscally possible. Then ask them to share their learned knowledge and skills with others.
10. Interact with students often so that your managerial demands do not overshadow the purpose and importance of ABE in the lives of real people. If possible, do some teaching in the classroom.
11. Keep detailed notes of all phone calls and conversations. They will be valuable in more ways than you can imagine.
12. Gain access to and become adept at UFARS (financial system) and MARCS or MABE (reporting databases). Establish a daily, weekly, or monthly routine of viewing, checking, and updating.
13. Try to let go of your work-related stress and leave it behind every day. Being overly consumed by program, teacher, or student problems is not good for you or your work. The building (and challenges) will be there tomorrow.
14. After statewide ABE meetings or Summer Institute, BREATHE and give yourself time to process new mandates, initiatives, or expectations. Talk with YOUR staff, set clear goals, and figure out what will work best for YOUR program and YOUR students.
15. When driving to an ABE meeting, keep a life and work balance by noticing the vibrant fall leaves, sparkling snow and sky, and lush spring and summer foliage until you are nearly at your destination.
16. Try to be flexible; ABE is a constantly changing field. Take a few risks and go with confidence.
17. KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR. Laugh more than worry or cry. Eat more ice cream! 😊
- 18. And finally, if you think you have seen it all, just you wait...**