

ANN Board Strategic Planning Meeting  
June 14-16, 2018

This report summarizes the strategic planning process and outcomes from a meeting of the Adult Numeracy Network board of directors in Minneapolis over the course of three days in June 2018. The ANN Board thanks Astrid Liden for her excellent work in planning and facilitating the meeting.

## Introduction

This report was inspired by a similar summary written after the ANN Board Strategic Planning Meeting held in October 2004 during ANN's 10th year. The strategic plan that came out of that meeting resulted in ANN guiding documents and ongoing projects that have been immensely valuable in the development of the organization, such as:

- The ANN Teaching and Learning Principles & Professional Development Principles
- Using small grants to promote practitioner research
- The ANN website

We hope that this current plan will be similarly useful as we continue to build our network.

## Preparation for strategic planning meeting

In preparation for the June 2018 strategic planning meeting, Amy Vickers, ANN president, and Astrid Liden, ABE Professional Development Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education, developed a plan for collecting input from the field and from ANN members and for determining the agenda for the board meeting at which this input could be considered in a way that led to goals for ANN. In the spring, Amy and other board members gathered input from ANN members through a survey and from the wider adult education community through an environmental scan. This work was done in order to identify current areas of highest need and trends in the field of adult numeracy.

### *Environmental Scan*

The environmental scan involved phone interviews with leaders from organizations doing work in fields related to adult numeracy. Amy led a series of discussions with the following people: Kaye Beall from the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), Chris Coro from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), Donna Curry from TERC, Katie Herz from American Institutes for Research (AIR), Deborah Kennedy from the National Coalition for Literacy (NCL), and Gina Kilday from National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). These conversations centered around a series of questions such as:

- *What challenges are you seeing in the field of adult numeracy?*
- *How could ANN improve our partnerships?*

- *Among different components of our mission (support, collaboration, leadership, advocacy, resources and training), where do you see the greatest need?*

### *Member Survey*

The member survey sent out in February 2018 included questions such as:

- *What are the greatest challenges the adult numeracy field is facing right now?*
- *Why did you decide to become a member of ANN?*
- *What is the greatest benefit of being an ANN member?*

57 ANN members responded to the survey. These responses were brought to the strategic planning meeting as data to help guide the board's decision-making.

### **Strategic planning process**

Astrid generously agreed to lead the strategic planning process over three days in June. The goals of the meeting were as follows:

- Review and analyze data from member survey and environmental scan
- Identify key themes and trends in the data to develop priorities, goals, and activities for the strategic plan
- Identify the role(s) each board member will have in implementing the strategic plan

The goal of the strategic planning meeting was to create an action plan that responded to input from members, stakeholders, and the ANN board.

ANN board members started by rigorously analyzing data from the ANN Member Survey and Environmental Scan phone calls, seeking to identify the highest needs in adult numeracy to which ANN should be responding. We were guided by the ANN mission and Working Vision.

**ANN Mission Statement:** *We are a community dedicated to quality mathematics instruction at the adult level. We support each other, we encourage collaboration and leadership, and we influence policy and practice in adult math instruction.*

The group also used a Working Vision, written by Amy Vickers and agreed upon by the board for the purpose of guiding the meeting: *Every adult learner has access to quality math instruction; every adult educator can access the resources needed to provide this instruction.*

### *Analyzing the environmental scan and member survey*

The board looked carefully at the results of the member survey, discussing what they noticed, what questions they had, what surprised them and what was affirming of the work that is already happening. One of the takeaways from the environmental scan conversations was that ANN's strength is our network. We have the tools and individual strengths to greatly advance the capacity of ANN to share adult numeracy best practices.

- ¾ of the members surveyed have joined ANN in the last 5 years.
- 75% of respondents are teachers.
- 40% of respondents are professional developers.

### *Developing goal statements*

From looking closely at this data, the group developed goal statements. In small groups we listed themes from member and environmental scan data. The group then mapped those themes to the five elements of the existing ANN mission. This process demonstrated that the mission was relevant as written, and could be used as a guide for future years. In order to advance ANN in each of those areas, we developed five goal statements upon which we could build an action plan.

### *Developing an action plan*

In developing an action plan in response to these goals, Astrid asked the board to consider the following questions for guidance:

Key questions for planning activities:

- *How can this activity connect with and support other activities?*
- *How can this activity help to accomplish multiple goals?*
- *How can this activity incorporate or share the ANN mission and/or principles?*
- *How can I mentor someone to take on my ANN role in the future? What timeline should be in place?*

*Connections to other members is the most popular benefit to being an ANN member, followed by Being part of an organization that advocates for strong adult numeracy instruction and Receiving the ANN newsletter: The Math Practitioner.*

### **The ANN Plan**

At the end of the planning process, themes emerged from which board members wrote goal statements which became known as "the ANN Plan." This strategic plan, meant to span through 2020, is the product of the planning process. In the table below, each goal in the ANN Plan is followed by a few activities

designed to accomplish that goal. This list is not to be seen as a to-do list of activities that will be fully accomplished by 2020. We will no doubt rethink some of the activities below and will start others aligned with these goals. Activities will be prioritized according to capacity and interest of membership, and in alignment with ongoing valued ANN activities.

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**GOAL 1:** ANN will offer and promote opportunities for teachers to be learners and to have and model mathematical habits of mind like being comfortable not knowing, investigating, and appreciating and learning from mistakes. ANN members will feel empowered to contribute to discourse around mathematics teaching and learning in their own contexts.

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- ANN will use the COABE Preconference as a way to increase member participation and involvement in leadership opportunities by those not already engaged in ANN work. Work will be completed by a committee of board members and regular members, especially those members who live in the region where COABE is being held. We will reach out to teachers in the area to encourage participation in the preconference even if they aren't able to attend the full conference.
- A committee will be formed to organize the COABE Numeracy strand, communicate with COABE, review numeracy workshop proposals, advertise the strand and thank presenters. Within the Numeracy Strand, we will work to develop coherence among presentations based on shared principles. ANN will look for opportunities to support the community that forms over the four days of the pre-conference and conference, first by helping new people become connected with ANN, and then providing opportunities for connections outside of the conference.
- ANN will promote PD done by its members and encourage members to promote ANN when presenting, so that the network's reach is broadened. Regional and national conferences and PD opportunities will be listed on the calendar within the #AskANN discussion group in the LINC Community.
- ANN will encourage the development of local math teachers circles. A map of regional/local math teacher circles can be published on the website so members can find a circle near them. Local circles would be involved in pre-conference and maybe a "doing math" workshop at COABE.

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**GOAL 2:** ANN members will find opportunities to connect to a professional community, with engagement options at different levels. ANN members will feel a sense of belonging.

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- ANN will develop a welcome process for new members which will explain how to get connected and involved with ANN. We will form a new welcome committee with state reps, with the goal of developing clear pathways for members to be involved in different ways. The welcome committee will create a welcome letter for new members with practical steps of becoming a new member: How to make an ANN account, how to join AskANN, and how to receive the ANN newsletter. We will also distribute a new member survey to learn more about why members join and how we can support their work.

- We have created a new online discussion list for ANN members. The #AskANN discussion board on LINCS will be an active web group where members can share teaching ideas, advocacy for adult numeracy, post about their struggles and support each other. Along with the #AskANN discussion list, we will start using an ANN member email distribution list as a mechanism for communication with members, with which we will alert members of information such as new materials on the web site, national PD offerings, and related resources.
- We will start a new section of the Math Practitioner for a spotlight on our members. We will ask members to respond to a couple brief prompts: What's your math story? How did you come to the math world? Our hope is that these narratives will show that there is value and strength in the different ways we have each come to mathematics.

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GOAL 3: ANN will build and utilize committees and other structures to expand leadership opportunities within the organization.

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- We will develop standing committees, including ANN members and board members, such as Member relations, Web publishing, COABE Numeracy strand, COABE Pre-conference, Virtual conference, #AskANN, Fundraising, and the Math Practitioner Editorial Staff. Members interested in joining any of these committees should email [annmembership@gmail.com](mailto:annmembership@gmail.com).
- We will develop joint committees with other organizations, such as a state outreach committee to include state PD leaders from each region, a research committee with AIR, and an OCTAE committee focusing on current needs of the field.
- In order to structure the work of committees, we will develop a committee volunteer application and criteria for selection, a list of responsibilities for both standing and joint committees (the committee charge), and a mission statement for each committee.

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GOAL 4: ANN will foster professional partnerships and collaborate with public and private organizations for the purpose of advancing the ANN Mission Statement.

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- ANN has relationships with other organizations related to adult numeracy. For example, Cynthia Bell (New York City, NY) represents us in our affiliate relationship with NCTM. We plan to build stronger relationships with decision-making organizations (e.g. LINCS and OCTAE), research-based organizations (e.g. AIR and TERC), and other professional organizations, (e.g. NCL). We also plan to connect with appropriate state adult education leadership in order to influence state policies and make connections to adult numeracy teachers around the country.

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GOAL 5: ANN will influence policy in adult math instruction, being a professional resource that influences decision-making on research projects, curriculum writing, and standardized tests.

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- We will be a visible and participatory presence for the purpose of informing organizations such as: OCTAE, state leadership, Department of Labor (DOL), Departments of Corrections, and publishers of HSE and NRS reporting assessments about best practices in adult numeracy.

- We will disseminate research and reports for the field of adult numeracy for the purpose of informing policy decisions, drawing on research from groups such as: AIR, NCTM, Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC), Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), NCL, and Adults Learning Mathematics (ALM).

## **Conclusion**

We will continue to use the five goals identified in the ANN Plan to organize our activities and projects moving forward. For example, in the fall/winter of 2018, one of our priorities was to start building the committees named in Goal 3. As of this writing, the Newsletter, Preconference and Web Publishing Committees are growing and becoming formalized. These and other committees will allow ANN to spread the work of continuing to build the organization among the board and membership.