

Section Seven: Successes and Challenges

Narrative items

Label	Description
7.1	Provide a brief story of student success that illustrates the power of ABE programming to make positive change for the individuals and communities served. (Be sure to obtain student permission for any personal information or work included.) <i>This story was shared with permission from ESL Learner, Viktoriia Shevchenko at our Minnetonka site. On her first day of class, in September 2022, she told her teacher she did NOT want to be here and did NOT want to speak English. She just wanted to go home to Ukraine.</i> “My name is Viktoriia Shevchenko. I’m from Ukraine, and I’ve been living in the United States since July 2022. When I first arrived, I was looking for a school where I could study English. I found out about the Adult Options program, and it happened to be located within my school district. That’s how my journey with the Minnetonka education system began. At the beginning, I felt lost. Everything was new — the language, the environment, the people. But over time, I found like-minded classmates and began to feel comfortable. Our teacher created a warm and welcoming atmosphere. She built trust and unity within the class. We became a real team — friendly, supportive, and on the same wavelength. Her sense of humor helped us deal with stress and made learning enjoyable. In addition to the teachers, I received incredible support from volunteers. They are an essential part of this program. But to me, they were much more than helpers. Together with my teacher, these people helped me fall in love with this country. They opened my eyes to all the good that exists here and became a true source of inspiration. This school helped me find myself. I was able to learn English to a level where I can now understand people. I even managed to enter college — something I once thought was impossible. My daughter is a student at Minnetonka Middle School West, and she is happy there. And for a mother, that means everything. I can confidently say: these are some of the best teachers we’ve ever had. We feel incredible support, and I am endlessly grateful for that. The Minnetonka education system has had a deep impact on our lives. One of the most precious gifts it gave me was a close friend — someone I met in English class who now feels like part of my family. And today, I also work in one of the schools in the Minnetonka district. To everyone involved in the Adult Options program and the Minnetonka school system — thank you. You are not just teaching us English. You are helping us rebuild our lives, feel hope, and believe in our future again.”

