

**Assessment and Accountability
for College and Career Readiness**

**Report of the
Commissioner's Assessment and Accountability Working Group
Minnesota Department of Education
December 5, 2012**

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Introduction: The Context and Challenge

It is essential for Minnesota to enact systemic changes designed to support our schools and communities in the fundamental task of preparing our students for success in an increasingly competitive world. Far too few of our students are completing high school within four years prepared for postsecondary education or entry into the workplace.

Recent data on four-year high school graduation rates highlight the challenges our state faces for every group of students, and even more pronouncedly for students of color.ⁱ It is also estimated that 70 percent of Minnesota jobs will require some form of postsecondary education by 2018,ⁱⁱ but currently only 47 percent of Minnesota college students complete a degree within eight years.ⁱⁱⁱ Minnesota cannot afford complacency and doubling down on unproven reforms.

Over the past decade, Minnesota joined the national effort to improve student outcomes by increasing statewide assessment and strengthening accountability. Yet, Minnesota's assessment results do not demonstrate the level of progress that Minnesota needs in order to have all students prepared for the future. Across numerous student outcome indicators, Minnesota continues to have one of the widest and most pervasive achievement gaps in the nation for students of color and low-income students.^{iv} The increased emphasis on testing and the multiple refinements to the state's accountability system have not leveraged the improvements envisioned with these reforms.

Additionally, higher education systems continue to highlight the substantial remedial costs incurred by students to ensure they are ready to take college-level courses. Forty percent of recent high school graduates who enrolled in a Minnesota public higher education institution currently take at least one non-credit-bearing developmental course.^v This not only creates a significant financial burden for students, but it also significantly decreases the likelihood of completing a degree or certificate.^{vi}

Furthermore, the emphasis on testing in mathematics and reading has led to a narrowing of curricular offerings at the elementary, middle and high school levels.^{vii} Although Minnesota cannot afford to minimize the importance of literacy and numeracy, schooling cannot be reduced to a series of courses and educational experiences enhancing only two core areas.

Every major review of educational literature focused on improving student achievement emphasizes the effectiveness of setting "challenging goals," "ambitious goals" or having a "commitment to seek further challenges," along with providing timely feedback to the students, teachers and families.^{viii} A high-quality statewide assessment system should provide the foundation for data-driven and focused improvement, but that system alone will not lead to improved student outcomes.

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessments are primarily tools used by educators and parents to determine the strengths and areas for growth of individual students. Since Minnesota's ultimate goal is to have college- and career-ready students, Minnesota's assessment system should be designed to assist students directly in achieving that goal. Such an assessment system will also provide feedback to decision makers at all levels on the effectiveness and alignment of the P-20 system to deliver such an education.

All other forms of assessments which would undermine the primary purposes identified should be discarded.

It is imperative for our state to adopt a K-12 assessment system tied to college and career readiness standards and to build the tools necessary to support schools and communities in reaching these rigorous goals. When assessment results are available almost immediately and contain actionable information, both on current performance and predictive of college and career readiness, that information can be used as feedback by students, teachers and parents to improve instruction, target interventions, and accelerate students' trajectory for college and career readiness.

An ambitious and necessary challenge lies before us—to have Minnesota's young adults be college and career ready and to have as much of that work as possible accomplished before students graduate from high school. This is not a task that falls solely to the state's high schools. It is a systemic challenge, beginning in pre-kindergarten, that spans the entire spectrum of schooling.

Charge to the Working Group

As a Working Group commissioned by the Minnesota Department of Education, we explored how Minnesota might redesign the state's assessment and accountability system to promote college and career readiness. We ensured that the options considered were in alignment with the goals of Governor Mark Dayton and Commissioner Brenda Cassellius.

Governor Dayton expressed a desire to reduce the amount of testing experienced by students and to ensure that any state assessment is useful for better instruction and accountability. Commissioner Cassellius envisions an assessment system that provides better and more meaningful results for educators, students and their families. The Working Group also relied heavily upon the breadth and depth of the personal and professional expertise of its members to meet its charges.

At its initial meeting, the Working Group was charged with reviewing our current assessment requirements in order to offer recommendations to the commissioner. The group considered a wide array of topics, including:

- The GRAD and high school assessments.
 - Review high school graduation requirements and what other states use for graduation requirements.
 - Discuss whether Minnesota should replace the old system of course taking, Carnegie units, and exit exams.
- Assessments measuring college readiness that are aligned to Minnesota's higher education system (MnSCU).
- Whether or not our assessments are redundant or misaligned.
- How state assessments might be more meaningful for students and parents.
- How assessments can assist in the preparation of students for college and a wider array of options after high school graduation, especially the role of career and technical pathways.
- The alignment between state and federal laws for accountability and local needs for informing instruction.
 - Assess how well the current state assessment system meets local needs.
 - Determine if districts add tests in order to inform instruction.
- The impact of assessment on instructional time, financial costs, and curriculum offerings.
- The costs and feasibility of new assessments that give us what we need to accurately measure school and student performance, including the time to develop and transition to a new system.

- How any newly proposed system will impact other things such as teacher and principal accountability and Minnesota's new accountability requirements under the current federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver.

The commissioner charged the Working Group to make recommendations for better testing in the following areas:

- Kindergarten/primary assessment
- Elementary assessments
- Secondary assessments (8-12) aligned to higher education admission requirements
- Cost considerations
- Policy change recommendations (Carnegie units, course taking, exit exams, etc.)

Working Group Background

Members of the Working Group included parents, school officials, teachers, business representatives, and the public, as determined by the commissioner. The Working Group held seven working meetings beginning on June 25, 2012. The final working meeting took place on November 27, 2012, and the recommendations included with this report were adopted.

The Minnesota Department of Education staff provided information to the committee on current state standards, the state accountability system, current testing requirements, and ESEA requirements. This was followed by presentations by ACT and the College Board, the two most prominent national assessment organizations used by colleges to help determine admissions. The group also heard from a representative from General Mills who shared the type of review the company does as they interview prospective employees and the types of skills and knowledge it is seeking. Members of the committee were also invited to present on the perspective of higher education and recent research studies analyzing the GRAD and college-readiness benchmarks.

Subcommittees

After being grounded in this information, the full committee divided into three subcommittees to more thoroughly study the issues and develop recommendations. The three subcommittees were as follows:

- Group 1: Elementary and Middle-level issues
- Group 2: High school transitions
- Group 3: GRAD requirements

Each of the subcommittees then developed recommendations for the full committee to consider. Subcommittee reports can be found beginning on page 11. The recommendations submitted by full committee action are based on the work and recommendations from the three subcommittees, with revisions made based upon deliberations of the full committee.

See Appendix B for the committee membership roster. [Subcommittee membership, meeting schedules and meeting documents from the 2012 Working Group may be found on the MDE website](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/AssessAccountWorkGroup/index.html) (<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/AssessAccountWorkGroup/index.html>).

Assessment and Accountability Working Group Recommendations

Our recommendations address both specific policy changes necessary to create the desired assessment and accountability system, and the characteristics and features of a revamped system. The Working Group supports the development and implementation of an assessment system for Minnesota that provides timely and effective feedback for the following stakeholders and their relevant decisions:

- Students, teachers and parents as to the progress students are making towards college and career readiness, the learning that needs to be achieved, and the identification by students of their individual pathways to the workforce and world that best match their talents and interests.
- Policy makers, elected officials and administrators at the school, district, postsecondary institutions, regional and state levels as to the effectiveness and alignment of the P-20 system to efficiently educate our youth, with care and guidance, as they grow from early childhood to young adulthood.

Therefore, the Assessment and Accountability Working Group adopted unanimously (except as noted) the following 11 recommendations and submits them for consideration to the commissioner of education.

Recommendation 1

The assessment system should be transparent, easy for teachers, students, parents and the public to understand; allow for multiple measures; and provide timely results to support instructional and curricular needs.

Recommendation 2

Assessments should be aligned from elementary through high school and be consistent with Minnesota's academic standards, with Minnesota college entrance requirements, and aligned to college readiness standards.

Recommendation 3 (Adopted 26-2)

Minnesota should eliminate the Minnesota GRAD in Writing, Reading and Mathematics and the corresponding rules governing the GRAD assessments. Minnesota should not replace the GRAD with another high-stakes graduation exam (i.e., a minimum required score on any assessment that would be used to deny a student a high school diploma).

In its place, Minnesota should institute a suite of assessments beginning in grade 8 that includes math, reading, writing and/or science that is aligned to college and career standards; with reporting options that can predict student success in postsecondary (career, two-year, four-year) programming. These comprehensive assessments should provide districts with results to inform counseling and early intervention, and should be sufficiently robust to satisfy admissions requirements for state colleges and universities.

Beginning in grade 10, or no later than the fall of grade 11, students who are not on track with the nationally normed benchmark scores for college and career readiness, as measured by the new suite of assessments, must:

- Take a nationally normed, diagnostic college placement exam which can identify an individual student's skill deficits in foundational areas (reading, writing and math) and provide valuable information to teachers so they may provide targeted interventions while the student is still in high school.
- Take the same nationally normed diagnostic college placement exam upon completion of targeted interventions, no later than the spring of grade 12, to determine whether skill deficits in foundational areas persist.

Recommendation 4

A career interest inventory should be administered in the eighth and/or ninth grades with an option for the inventory being available in grades 10 through 12 at the request of a student or a parent. This should be aligned at the middle- and high-school levels to encourage and emphasize postsecondary and career guidance, and to provide optional components to measure technical and soft skills.

Recommendation 5

In order to support pre-school and kindergarten reading readiness, age-appropriate literacy development assessments should be made available for school districts to use as part of the state's Read Well by 3rd Grade initiative. These assessments would be available to districts at no direct cost. Participation in these assessments would remain under the purview of local districts.

Recommendation 6

The Minnesota Department of Education should work collaboratively with Minnesota stakeholders (and begin negotiations with the U.S. Department of Education regarding additional ESEA flexibility) to develop a state-of-the-art assessment system in grades 3-7 with the following characteristics (at a minimum):

- Diagnostic and adaptive capabilities to provide immediate and actionable data to educators, parents and students across the full spectrum of student performance.
- Anchored in Minnesota's academic standards.
- Appropriately predictive of trajectories for college and career readiness.
- Provides results useful for measuring growth and proficiency.

Recommendation 7

The state should continue to participate in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to provide a measure of achievement comparable across states, and participate in international benchmarking studies to provide comparisons to international academic performance, with sufficient resources available to ensure appropriate participation.

Recommendation 8

Assessments should be aligned to Minnesota academic standards but multiple measures should be used to determine proficiency and growth.

Recommendation 9

Minnesota should continue to examine the common core standards and assessments as part of the state's ongoing standards review cycle.

Recommendation 10

Minnesota should strive for the following:

- Providing online assessments with results immediately available to educators, parents, and students.
- Making diagnostic, on-demand assessments, and resources available to districts to support targeted interventions.
- Ensuring that assessments have the psychometric quality that provides every student with precise scores that are valid and reliable for both very low-achieving and very high-achieving students.

Recommendation 11

MDE and the Office of Higher Education (OHE) should continue to collaborate on the Statewide Longitudinal Educational Data System (SLEDS) to ensure transparency to parents and educators and to produce relevant reports for policy makers and the Minnesota Legislature.

At a minimum, SLEDS should provide the following data:

- The levels of achievement in relation to state content standards and on college and career-readiness benchmarks.
- Graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment, and degree or credential attainment for Minnesota graduates.

SLEDS should provide answers to questions such as the following:

- Are more students and a higher percentage of the graduating cohorts continuing their education in postsecondary institutions?
- Are students more ready for college, as evidenced by a reduction in the percentage of students entering postsecondary institutions taking developmental classes?
- What are the relationships among high school graduation, GPA, scores on normed college entrance assessments and diagnostic placement assessments?
- Is there a range of scores on the nationally normed college diagnostic assessment below which students are unlikely to receive a high school diploma?

- What percentage of high school graduates are not college-ready, as defined by the college entrance assessment and/or the nationally normed college diagnostic placement assessment?
- What are the relationships between openings in the Minnesota workforce and student enrollment in postsecondary degree and certificate programs?

Recommendations at a Glance: Current and Proposed Assessment Systems

<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
Student Goal Attainment	GRAD Tests (minimum competency)	Suite of assessments similar to EPAS/SAT (College and Career Readiness)
Predictive Data	MCA paper and online Other diagnostic tests selected, funded and administered by K-12 districts Voluntary participation in college entrance tests and aligned predictors	State-of-the-art elementary and middle school assessments Suite of assessments with characteristics similar to EPAS Diagnostic placement assessment aligned with college entrance standards
Data to Inform Instruction and Identify Student Needs	Other diagnostic tests funded by K-12 district	Suite of online assessments aligned to the state’s academic standards with immediate diagnostic results available On-demand, nationally normed diagnostic placement assessments for targeted interventions
Individual and System Comparison Data	MCA and GRAD MDE data website NAEP, TIMSS, PISA MMR	All assessments in the system MDE data website NAEP, TIMSS, PISA, MMR Statewide Longitudinal Educational Data System (SLEDS)
Career Guidance	ACT Plan and Explore offered as options to school districts	Career interest inventory by 8 th grade aligned with academic performance Additional career interest inventories upon request

Subcommittee Reports

The following are the reports from each of the sub-groups to the full committee. The recommendations forwarded by the Accountability and Achievement Working Group incorporated the accepted portions of these reports. These reports are provided to document the discussions and work of the subcommittees.

Elementary/Middle Level

The following is the report with recommendations from the Elementary and Middle-Level subcommittee.

Assessments should fulfill the following purposes:

1. Provide information on system accountability to determine the level of success on the achievement of state content standards.
2. Allow timely results to be used to support instructional and curricular alignment and changes (formative and diagnostic assessments).
3. Allow for multiple measures.
4. Assessment system should be transparent, easy for teachers, students, parents and the public to understand.
5. Encourage all schools to move towards online assessment for instant results.
6. Pre-school and kindergarten-second grade reading readiness or reading placement assessments need to be included as part of literacy development (third grade is too late).
7. Assessments should be aligned from elementary through high school and consistent with Minnesota standards.
8. Use a comprehensive test beginning in grade 8 that includes math, reading, writing and/or science; aligned to college and career standards; with reporting options that can predict students' success in postsecondary (career, two-year, four-year) programming.
9. The Minnesota Assessment System should support teacher evaluation and development as required by Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.40.
10. The Minnesota Assessment System should continue improving the psychometric quality of existing tests so that every student receives a precise score. In other words, strive to make scores more reliable for very low-achieving and very high-achieving students.

High School Transitions

The following is the report with recommendations from the High School Transitions to Postsecondary Education subcommittee.

1. Begin with the end in mind. If our collective goal is college and career readiness for all students, mandate the use of a widely accepted, nationally normed college

entrance exam system for all Minnesota students, aligned to state standards, in place of our current MCA exams, beginning in 8th grade. The adopted college entrance exam system should have assessments of a predictive nature and be aligned to the college entrance exam in grades 8 to 10. The college entrance exam should then be taken in 11th or 12th grade.

2. Mandate the following, for students beginning in grade 10 who are not on track with the nationally normed benchmark scores for college and career readiness, based on the adopted college entrance system suite of assessments:
 - a. Take a nationally normed diagnostic college entrance exam to identify an individual student's skill deficits in foundational areas (reading, writing and math) and provide valuable information to teachers on areas to focus on so targeted interventions to address these needs can be provided while the student is still in high school.
 - b. Retake the same nationally normed diagnostic college entrance exam during the spring of grade 12 to identify whether skill deficits in foundational areas persist.
3. In order to provide the greatest effect on a student's postsecondary intentions and plans leading to their entrance and growth of Minnesota's skilled workforce:
 - a. All middle and high schools should be encouraged to emphasize postsecondary and career guidance.
 - b. MDE should survey all middle and high schools on the postsecondary and career guidance they offer all students, whether through counselors, career centers, advisories, courses, or other means of engaging students and parents in postsecondary and career guidance.
 - c. MDE should assemble a working group to review the survey results and consider formulating postsecondary and career guidance standards for grades 6-12.
4. For transparency, accountability and decision making at the individual, school, district, and state levels, MDE should incorporate Statewide Longitudinal Educational Data System (SLEDS) college-readiness and postsecondary enrollment and attainment data on its Data Center web page for parents and educators. MDE should collaborate with the Office of Higher Education (OHE) to produce relevant reports for policy makers and the Legislature.
5. As with all assessment tools, it is important to have a holistic view of a student's attributes. Thus, the group recommends that students have the opportunity to be assessed for career aspirations, technical skills and soft skills to help provide valuable information to students, their families, their teachers and their counselors, for guidance into postsecondary education and career pathways.

In order to make use of the diagnostic tools being developed based on the Common Core State Standards, the committee expresses interest in opening a conversation as soon as possible to determine whether Minnesota should reconsider its stance on the *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics*.

GRAD

The following is the report with recommendations from the GRAD Subcommittee.

The GRAD subcommittee was specifically charged with considering the future of the GRAD requirement with the impending implementation of the MCA-III. Beginning in 2013 for Reading and 2014 for Mathematics, students will no longer have an opportunity to pass an embedded GRAD as part of the MCA-III administration. Students who achieve proficiency will satisfy the GRAD requirement under current rule. Under existing law, the Class of 2015 is the first cohort of students required to pass the Mathematics GRAD in addition to the Reading and Writing GRAD. Those not proficient must re-take the GRAD until they pass all three exams.

It is in this context that the GRAD subcommittee recommends the following for consideration by the Assessment and Accountability Work Group:

Recommendation 1

Eliminate the GRAD and its corresponding rules entirely and immediately.

Implications: Upon passage, students no longer must pass any GRAD test as a requirement for earning a diploma. All other state graduation requirements would remain.

Rationale: Minnesota cannot afford to continue an assessment misaligned with existing and future standards. While the research on the potential impact of high stakes graduation testing is not settled, a number of studies indicate that they have an overall negative impact, disproportionately borne by low-income students, students of color, and English Learners. The GRAD re-orientes high schools and a significant portion of students toward the wrong outcome—passing a state test. The GRAD requires an annual investment by the state for ongoing administration and imposes significant direct costs on districts and schools for administration and remediation. The GRAD also has significant opportunity costs associated with it for both students and schools.

Recommendation 2

Refocus Minnesota's high school assessments on postsecondary readiness. Offer an assessment in the grade 9-10 band providing a measure of high-school readiness in reading and mathematics, as well as the trajectory toward postsecondary readiness benchmarks. Such assessments should allow for the following:

- An interest inventory to inform choices about pathways.
- A diagnostic, on-demand assessment for districts to support interventions with students who are off trajectory.
- Opportunity for students to be re-assessed multiple times throughout the 9-10 grade band.
- A developmental writing assessment offered in 9 and, depending upon availability of resources, a suite of assessments offered in grades 11-12 designed to measure postsecondary readiness, with multiple benchmarks established for various pathways upon graduation.

- Assessments offered in reading, mathematics, and writing. The state can offer a much more rigorous writing assessment—potentially through innovative approaches—with the goal of substantive external feedback on writing exercises.
- Assessments would also have diagnostic components to assist students in changing trajectories with multiple opportunities to access information.
- Additional interest inventories provided with alignment to identified pathways upon graduation.
- Assessments should be sufficiently robust to satisfy state colleges' and universities' admissions requirements.

Implications: Reframing the high school assessments required of Minnesota students with college and career readiness as the benchmark allows for the development of a coherent assessment system charged with providing students, families, educators, and the public with actionable information regarding the aspirations of all students.

Rationale: See the report of the High School Transitions subcommittee and Appendix A.

Recommendation 3

Place primary accountability metrics at the school, district, and system level. Individual accountability is tied to completing requirements, not passing certain thresholds.

Implications: Individual student accountability no longer tied to specific scores on state assessments; individual student accountability tied to fulfillment of requirements, which could be enhanced, such as requiring participation in readiness assessments. System accountability tied to percent of senior cohort reaching various readiness benchmarks within the traditional four years allotted to high school, with additional measures tied to the total percentage of students reaching the threshold without consideration of time.

Rationale: The state monitors and supports the system, not individuals, so the system is the appropriate level for state accountability. It also supports the primary purpose of the assessment system to provide important, actionable information about student progress, in this case regarding postsecondary readiness. This also reinforces the reality that high school graduation is not a terminal point, but a marker of significant transition to further preparation.

Appendix A: Executive Summary

Eight Significant HS-College-Workforce Reports and Minnesota Statutes

By the HS-College Transitions Sub-Committee of the MDE Assessment and Accountability Working Group

[Summer-Fall 2012 Complete Summary with Links and References:](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/AssessAccountWorkGroup/index.html)

(<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/AssessAccountWorkGroup/index.html>)

Study	Significant Facts	Critical Problem Identified	Potential Solutions
<p><i>Common Measures for Access</i> by the National College Access Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies percent completing common core • Provides a dashboard tool to organize, analyze and display data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many measures, but not exhaustive • Collection and use of data to guide improvement, demonstrate effectiveness • Equitable outcomes for subgroups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage use of data to inform programming • Provide indicator of whether student is on track
<p><i>Getting Prepared:</i> A 2010 report on recent high school graduates who took developmental or remedial courses, by MNSCU and the University of Minnesota</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87 percent of students taking developmental courses attend two-year or technical college • 80 percent of students taking developmental course took a math course • 45 percent of students taking developmental course took only math 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math continues to draw the majority of students in developmental education • Students may not understand that developmental courses do not count towards a certificate or degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve math achievement among K-12 students for the biggest payoff • Coordinate curriculum between K-12 and technical college • Create pathways for K-12 earlier in high school career • Develop technical school standards

Study	Significant Facts	Critical Problem Identified	Potential Solutions
<p><i>Higher Education Partnerships for Prosperity</i>, by The Itasca Project based on research and analysis by McKinsey and Company</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota is 8th in U.S. for both college enrollment and research and development expenditures • Minnesota has experienced 35 percent reduction in state funding over the last 10 years, compared with 20 percent nationally • Higher education is key to Minnesota remaining competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education institutions act independently • Businesses not interacting directly with institutions • Web-based courses alter future of how students will be served • By 2018, 70 percent of Minnesota jobs will require postsecondary education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align academic offerings with workforce needs • Foster an ecosystem of research and innovation • Form new collaborations across higher education
<p><i>How to Make Minnesota the Skilled Workforce State</i> by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many students graduate with deficiencies and missing critical skills • Students don't understand how postsecondary education impacts their prospects for employment • Insufficient collaboration between schools and businesses to provide skills and workplace knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve alignment of K-12 and postsecondary education • Make postsecondary education more affordable and efficient • Build collaborations and drive innovation

Study	Significant Facts	Critical Problem Identified	Potential Solutions
<p><i>Math Readiness of Incoming Students at Normandale Community College</i> by the University of Minnesota Center for Advanced Research on Educational Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large proportion of Bloomington K-12 graduates require remedial course work • Bloomington wanted to see if high school data on students could predict a need for remediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was messy capturing data at the individual student level • The lag time between a course completion and the college placement test was more important than the MCA result • Math has a one year half-life for retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have college offer bridge course in the summer • Have high school offer refresher math course to seniors prior to taking ACCUPLACER
<p><i>Post-Secondary Success for Increasing Awareness, Aspiration, Opportunity and Attainment</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misalignment exists between college-ready standards and coursework expectations • A workforce skills gap exists • Students are not focused on career goals, options, market trends, or available educational paths • A need exists to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness at postsecondary institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better align standards and assessments with postsecondary needs • Remediate in high school using targeted interventions and support • Increase postsecondary credit options in high school • Understand students' skills and develop personal student plans aligned to careers

Study	Significant Facts	Critical Problem Identified	Potential Solutions
<p><i>The Road Map to College and Career Readiness for Minnesota Students</i> by the Postsecondary Readiness Working Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences exist between readiness for success in college and success in high-skill jobs • It is unknown which MCA, ACT, and ACCUPLACER test scores predict readiness • It is unknown which junior and seniors in high school will require developmental courses in college • Minnesota students need information about pathways to college and career readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a database to access information from all schools is monumental • Assessment data is not the only predictor for success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate "Are you ready for college and career" to all parties • Identify academic trends to target resources more efficiently • Ensure all Minnesota students develop a postsecondary goal • Provide bridge programs between high school and college • Provide financial information to all students and families • Provide multiple opportunities for educators to work across educational systems • Fund small-scale, locally developed pilot projects to develop and implement "Best Practices"

Study	Significant Facts	Critical Problem Identified	Potential Solutions
<p><i>Where to Begin: Executive Summary by Jobs for the Future</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little correlation between test results and future college success • Some research suggests that students who take developmental courses are unlikely to complete college • Math placement tests do not measure math skills needed for college success (e.g., persistence, motivation and critical thinking) • High school grades are a better predictor of success in gateway courses than placement tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatives to traditional placement tests must be found • Placement tests provide a narrow look at students' college readiness, and they are a weak predictor of success in gateway courses • Only some students need most of the assessed math skills • Placement exams provide little to no diagnostic information for instructors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using multiple measures for assessment • Provide test to identify strength and weaknesses rather than simple cut scores • Provide more support for students around tests • Mainstream students directly into college-level courses, and provide remediation only if necessary • Help students brush up on skills in math or English • Assess cognitive strategies (i.e., critical thinking, problem solving)

Study	Significant Facts	Critical Problem Identified	Potential Solutions
<p>Current Minnesota Statutes Pertaining to High School-College-Workforce Transitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic standards must include postsecondary faculty • Cannot obligate students to involuntarily select a career interest or employment goal • Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations promotes vocational organizations and applied leadership opportunities • Educational and Employment Transitions System establishes a comprehensive education and employment transitions system with multi-sector partnership 		

Appendix B: Membership Roster

Matthew Mohs – Co-chair

Executive Director
Title I/Funded Programs
Saint Paul Public Schools

Fred Nolan – Co-chair

Executive Director
Minnesota Rural Education Association

Members

Jan Alswager
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Jim Angermeyr
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Jim Bartholomew
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Representative Kathy Brynaert
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Bonnie Cannon
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Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Grace Keliher
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Minnesota School Boards Association

Chris Richardson
Superintendent
Northfield Public Schools

George Kimball
School Board Treasurer
White Bear Lake Area Schools

Eric Robertson
Strategic Alliance Manager
Microsoft Education

Lloyd Komatsu
Assessment and Evaluation Coordinator
Forest Lake Area Schools

Hal Schroer
Parent
Parents United

Lynne Kovash
Superintendent
Moorhead Area Public Schools

Aldo Sicoli
Superintendent
Robbinsdale Area Schools

Maypahou Ly
Teen Program Coordinator
Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the Greater
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Eric Sivertson
Physics Teacher
Milaca Public Schools

Greg Marcus
Administrator
Senate Education Committee

Jocelyn Sims
Principal
Battle Creek Middle School

Representative Carlos Mariani
Minnesota House of Representatives

Amy Walstien
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Education and Workforce Development
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

Conn McCartan
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Eden Prairie High School

Barb Ziemke
Parent Trainer and Advocate
Project Coordinator
PACER Center

Christopher Moore
Evaluation and Testing Specialist
Minneapolis Public Schools

Paul Neubauer
Principal
St. Francis High School

Christopher Orr
Government Relations and Policy Manager
MinnCAN

End Notes

ⁱ U.S. Department of Education Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates for 2010-11 (Ed.gov, USED, Nov. 26, 2012).

Gaps in Minnesota Graduation Rate for Graduating Class 2010-11

<i>Major Racial/ Ethnic Groups</i>	<i>Four Year Adjusted Graduation Rate</i>	<i>Gap from White- Non-Hispanic</i>	<i>Graduation Rate Rank Among 50 States</i>
White-Non Hispanic	84%		25 th
American Indian	42%	42%	50 th
African American	49%	35%	49 th
Hispanic	51%	33%	50 th
Limited English Proficient	52%	32%	37 th
Children with Disabilities	56%	28%	30 th
Economically Disadvantaged	58%	26%	48 th
Asian Pacific Islander	72%	12%	49 th
All Students	77%	7%	25 th

[Read more on the Minnesota Rural Education Association website](http://mnrea.org/u-s-grad-rate-report-highlights-minnesota-achievement-gaps/) (http://mnrea.org/u-s-grad-rate-report-highlights-minnesota-achievement-gaps/).

ⁱⁱ *Higher Education Partnership for Prosperity*, Itasca Project, 2012, p. 1.

ⁱⁱⁱ Currently 77 percent of graduating high school seniors enroll in a postsecondary institution, but only 47 percent complete a degree within eight years (National Clearinghouse data on 2004 Minnesota Graduates).

^{iv} In its 2010 report, *Gauging the Gaps: A Deeper Look at Student Achievement*, the Education Trust did not identify Minnesota among the bottom five states for overall achievement and gaps. In the deeper analysis, Minnesota continues to have significantly large gaps between students of color and white students. Low-income students also underperform their higher income peers. [Read the report on the Education Trust website](http://www.edtrust.org/dc/publication/gauging-the-gaps-a-deeper-look-at-student-achievement) (http://www.edtrust.org/dc/publication/gauging-the-gaps-a-deeper-look-at-student-achievement). Retrieved on 12/4/12.

^v Within two years of high school graduation, 53 percent of the class of 2008 enrolled in a Minnesota public higher education institution (*Getting Prepared*, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the University of Minnesota, 2011, p. iii).

^{vi} A more complete review of the K-12 to college and career “gaps” is found in Appendix A: A Summary of Eight Significant HS-College-Workforce Reports and Current Minnesota Statutes Executive Summary.

^{vii} The Center on Education Policy has synthesized a number of studies providing evidence of curriculum narrowing across all grade levels in the NLCB-era. [Find a list of reviews on the CEP website](http://www.cep-dc.org/page.cfm?FloatingPageID=12) (http://www.cep-dc.org/page.cfm?FloatingPageID=12).

^{viii} As shown in recent works as Marzano, *What Works in Schools* pp. 35-39; Odden, *10 Strategies for Doubling Student Performance*, pp. 13-26, 47-58; Hattie, *Visible Learning* pp. 22-38.