

## Title I, Part A: Access to Educators, School Conditions and School Transitions

1. **Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B)):** Describe how low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and the measures the SEA will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the SEA with respect to such description.

In 2015, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) submitted our [State Plan to Ensure Poor and Minority Students Have Equitable Access to Experienced, Qualified, In-field Teachers](#) (referred to hereafter as the state equitable access plan) to the U.S. Department of Education in response to Secretary Duncan’s 2014 letter to state education agencies (SEAs) and guidance released in 2014. At that time, Minnesota engaged stakeholders in a process (described thoroughly in the state equitable access plan) to analyze statewide data, identify gaps in equitable access, determine root causes, and identify and implement strategies to address those root causes. Minnesota stakeholders also crafted definitions for certain terms (e.g., inexperienced teacher) that were critical in determining what will be measured and reported in our equitable access work.

While the Every Student Succeeds Act continues the focus on student access to teachers, there were some changes in requirements that became one focus area of MDE’s ESSA stakeholder engagement. The inclusion of “ineffective” (which was optional under the 2015 U.S. Department of Education guidance) and the regulation to report student-level data (since repealed) were new areas that would impact our equitable access work. Consequently, MDE convened a diverse group of stakeholders—the [ESSA Educator Quality Committee](#)—to offer direction and advice to the commissioner relative to equitable educator access. In particular, stakeholders were to respond to three guiding questions:

- How should Minnesota best define, measure, collect and report “effective/ineffective” teacher data?
- What should be the local’s role to ensure equitable access?
- How should the state support local efforts to ensure equitable access?

Minnesotans believe that many factors contribute to a teacher’s overall effectiveness. Stakeholders brainstormed dozens of characteristics of effective teachers, including but not limited to:

- Pedagogy—meets/exceeds professional teaching standards, standards-based and culturally relevant instructional and assessment practices, etc.
- Dispositions—collaborative, recognizes cultural assets, intentional professional choices, etc.
- Professionalism—engaged in the wider school system, fulfills assignments, conduct, etc.
- Student impact—students experience academic growth; students of all racial, cultural, economic, language, religious, gender and orientation backgrounds feel safe, supported, engaged, etc.

In the end, committee members seemed to agree that multiple measures of effectiveness should be considered, including measures of adult practice (e.g., instruction, pedagogy, relationships) and student outcomes (e.g., achievement, growth, engagement).

Minnesota's World's Best Workforce (WBWF) law (Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11), reinforces ESSA by requiring local educational agencies (LEAs)—districts, charters, intermediate districts, education cooperatives—to create local equitable access plans to ensure low-income and students of color and American Indian students are not disproportionately taught by inexperienced, ineffective or out-of-field teachers. [LEAs must annually report publicly on their plans and results and submit a report summary to MDE. In addition to receiving a summary report with this information each year, MDE will also collect annual assurances from LEAs that local equitable access data has been publicly reported locally annually.](#) Furthermore, this law requires local educational agencies to improve student access to teachers of color and American Indian teachers.

Minnesota has a state law requiring local education authorities to implement local plans to develop and evaluate teachers based on common professional teaching standards and on student outcomes. The teacher development and evaluation law explicitly requires local educational agencies to identify teachers not meeting professional teaching standards, support them to improve, and discipline teachers who have not improved after being supported. Furthermore, the law requires [districts and schools](#) to ensure that students are not taught in consecutive years by teachers who are on [an improvement plan](#) or being disciplined for not meeting professional teaching standards. While the statute provides the criteria that must be met by local educational agencies, it is a local control mandate, giving local educational agencies the flexibility to design evaluation systems [within guidelines in the law](#) that best meet the needs of their communities, students, and educators. [The law further defines teacher evaluation results as local personnel data, preventing the state from collecting evaluation results.](#)

Minnesota, with the input of stakeholders, has defined the following terms which, in turn, will determine the measures used in Minnesota's equitable access work.

- **Equitable access:** The situation in which low-income students, students of color or American Indian students are educated by ineffective, inexperienced and out-of-field teachers at rates that are at least equal to the rates at which other students are educated by ineffective, inexperienced and out-of-field teachers.
- **Equity gap:** The difference between the rate at which low-income students, students of color or American Indian students are educated by ineffective, inexperienced and out-of-field teachers and the rate at which other students are educated by ineffective, inexperienced, and out-of-field teachers.
- **Ineffective teacher:** For the purpose of evaluating equitable access data, an ineffective teacher shall be defined as a teacher who is not meeting professional teaching standards as defined in local teacher development and evaluation (TDE) systems. Additionally, for the purpose of early education teachers, an ineffective teacher shall be defined as a teacher who cannot demonstrate knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language development programs and instruction. In order to be considered effective for the purpose of evaluating equitable access, a teacher must have been evaluated by the local evaluation system. [\(Minnesota law defines teacher evaluation data as local personnel data. For the purpose of statewide reporting and planning, Minnesota will report student access to teachers with advanced degrees as a measure of equitable access to effective teachers.\)](#)

- **Inexperienced teacher:** An inexperienced teacher shall be defined as a licensed teacher who has been employed for three years or less.
- **Out-of-field teacher:** An out-of-field teacher shall be defined as a licensed teacher who is providing instruction in an area which he or she is not licensed.
- **Low-income student:** A low-income students should be defined as a student who qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch.
- **Student of color:** A student of color shall be defined as a student who meets the definition under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as most recently authorized, excluding the student categories of poverty, disability and English learners. This definition includes students in the following student groups: Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and two or more races.

Beginning in 2018, Minnesota will implement a new tiered licensure model. Minnesota will re-engage stakeholders to revisit the definitions of terms in the context of the new tiered licensure system once it is implemented.

Current data regarding Minnesota’s equitable access gaps are displayed in the following tables.

### Equitable Access Gaps

Profile	Count Inexperienced Teachers	Count Total Teachers	Percent Inexperienced Teachers	Count Classes Out Of Field	Count Total Classes	Percent Classes Out Of Field
Statewide – All	8,564	59,908	14.3%	19,396	411,395	4.7%
Statewide – Non-Title I	3,926	32,100	12.2%	11,565	259,347	4.5%
Statewide – Title I	4,638	27,808	16.7%	7,831	152,048	5.2%
Highest Quartile FRP – Non-Title I	310	1,923	16.1%	2,719	25,992	10.5%
Lowest Quartile FRP – Non-Title I	1,566	14,651	10.7%	3,808	11,0763	3.4%
Highest Quartile FRP – Title I	1,905	8,692	21.9%	2,789	65,829	4.2%
Lowest Quartile FRP – Title I	571	4,336	13.2%	1,263	21,290	5.9%
Highest Quartile SOC – Non-Title I	483	3,314	14.6%	2,772	59,067	4.7%
Lowest Quartile SOC – Non-Title I	887	7,486	11.8%	1,310	40,455	3.2%
Highest Quartile SOC – Title I	2,124	10,551	20.1%	2,852	74,535	3.8%
Lowest quartile SOC – Title I	776	5,400	14.4%	1,592	21,824	7.3%

Profile	Count Teachers without Advanced Degrees (Less Than Bachelors, Bachelors, or Bachelors + credit up to 60 credits)	Count Teachers with Only Masters	Count Teachers with Masters + Extra Credits, EDD, or PhD	Total Count Teachers Education Known	Percent Teachers without Advanced Degrees (Less Than Bachelors, Bachelors, or Bachelors + credit up to 60 credits)	Percent Teachers with Only Masters	Percent Teachers with Masters + Extra Credits, EDD, or PhD
Statewide - All	58,836	33,287	42,169	134,292	43.8%	24.8%	31.4%
Statewide – Non-Title I	33,000	21,398	28,199	82,597	40.0%	25.9%	34.1%
Statewide – Title I	25,836	11,889	13,970	51,695	50.0%	23.0%	27.0%
Highest Quartile FRP – Non-Title I	5,125	2,871	3,115	11,111	46.1%	25.8%	28.0%
Lowest Quartile FRP – Non-Title I	7,801	6,560	10,788	25,149	31.0%	26.1%	42.9%
Highest Quartile FRP – Title I	6,892	2,937	4,194	14,023	49.1%	20.9%	29.9%
Lowest Quartile FRP – Title I	5,902	3,298	3,618	12,818	46.0%	25.7%	28.2%
Highest Quartile SOC – Non-Title I	7,655	5,374	7,782	20,811	36.8%	25.8%	37.4%
Lowest Quartile SOC – Non-Title I	8,985	4,587	4,973	18,545	48.4%	24.7%	26.8%
Highest Quartile SOC – Title I	7,676	3,321	5,177	16,174	47.5%	20.5%	32.0%
Lowest Quartile SOC – Title I	5,905	2,255	1,677	9,837	60.0%	22.9%	17.0%

FRP = Students qualifying for free/reduced-price lunch (low income)

SOC = Students of color and American Indian students

A number of equitable access gaps are revealed by this data.

- Statewide, students in Title I schools are more likely to be taught by an inexperienced teacher, ~~or~~ an out-of-field teacher, or a teacher without an advanced degree.
- Students in Title I schools with the largest proportion of low income students are more likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers (21.9 percent) compared with non-Title I schools statewide (12.2 percent). At the same time, students in these settings are more likely to have an in-field teacher (4.2 percent compared with 4.5 percent) and are more likely to have a teacher without an advanced degree (49.1 percent compared with 40.0 percent).

- Also, students in non-Title I schools with the largest proportion of low income students are more likely to be taught by out-of-field teachers (10.5 percent) compared with Title I schools statewide (5.2 percent).
- Taken together, schools with large proportions of low income students—regardless of Title I status—are more likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers.
- Students in Title I schools with the largest proportion of students of color and American Indian students are more likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers (20.1 percent) compared with non-title I schools statewide (12.2 percent). At the same time, students in these settings are more likely to have an in-field teacher (3.8 percent compared with 4.5 percent) [and are more likely to have a teacher without an advanced degree \(47.5 percent compared with 40.0 percent\)](#).

MDE is in the process of convening an ongoing stakeholder group who will continue to monitor state data and assist MDE with updating the state equitable access plan and state-level strategies. This group will start with the above data set and will have the opportunity to review additional data. They will also review previous and current strategies that the state has pursued since the original state equitable access plan in 2015.

Stakeholders will conduct a root-cause analysis and eventually identify strategies that the state can pursue to address the root causes. While MDE has identified and made publicly available our timelines and interim targets for eliminating identified equitable access gaps in our 2015 state equity plan, stakeholders and the commissioner will update these targets during school year 2017-18 based on updated terminology, data and stakeholder feedback.

MDE will also work to provide guidance, training, and other resources to support local educational agencies to engage in local equitable access planning [and reporting](#) as part of their World’s Best Workforce efforts. MDE will encourage local educational agencies to use the state definitions as a starting point for local equitable access planning. Districts are encouraged to study equitable access gaps using state definitions and—based on local context—to identify other student groups not explicitly named in the law (e.g., English learners, students with disabilities, students from cultural or heritage groups where past experience or trauma may affect equitable access), other teacher characteristics (e.g., level of professional license, teacher degree attainment, teacher attendance rates) or both. While the state definition of “ineffective” is a baseline all districts must use, teacher evaluation systems are locally designed and implemented and evaluation systems must use multiple measures of effectiveness based on professional teaching standards in rule and measures of student academic growth. [Even though teacher evaluation systems are locally designed and implemented, under World’s Best Workforce, districts must annually report publicly on local equitable student access to effective teachers. MDE will collect assurances that LEAs have publicly reported local equitable access data.](#) Finally, MDE will provide resources to support districts to look not just at the school-level data, but also at classroom- and student-level data to illuminate educator equity gaps that exist within and between schools and classrooms.

One way MDE will support local educational agencies to create local equitable access plans is through our statewide data collection and reporting. The state data MDE provides local educational agencies will provide useful comparison points as they look for and address local equitable access gaps. MDE will continue to report data with regard to teacher experience, [and teacher assignment \(or, whether teachers are working within their licensure fields\), and as well as some other measures \(e.g., teacher degree attainment\)](#). These data will be

available on the public [Minnesota Report Card](#) where stakeholders will be able to search for a district or a school and review information about the staffing profile.

Additionally, MDE provides every Minnesota district and charter school a WBWF data profile on an annual basis. Among other measures, these profiles include district data that show whether students of color and American Indian students and low-income students have equitable access to experienced and in-field teachers. [MDE will add information to the data profiles that shows whether students of color and American Indian students and low-income students have equitable access to effective teachers by adding data about the rates at which students are taught by teachers with advanced degrees.](#) This gives MDE the opportunity to provide every district and charter in the state with clear data on how they are contributing to the closing of statewide equity gaps based on the measures required in ESSA. While it is important to measure and publicly report equitable access data at the state level, it is critical for MDE to be transparent with district leaders on the gaps that may exist in their individual districts.

Local educational agencies will be able to use both state and local data in order to identify, document and report the local gaps in equitable access to quality and diverse teachers. Per state law, local educational agencies must make their WBWF plans public, publicly report progress towards WBWF goals, and submit an annual summary to MDE. Local educational agencies are well-positioned to drill down to the student- or classroom-level for all the available data points, which is often where additional inequities are revealed.

Stakeholders have also asked us to contribute to and to collaborate on community efforts to support educational equity overall and equitable access efforts in particular. Organizations such as the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership are actively seeking legislation and funding to improve and diversify the teacher pipeline among other areas of interest to the organization. Stakeholders have said that MDE should participate and be present in stakeholder-led work rather than limiting ourselves to bringing stakeholders in for state-led work. Community-based organizations are empowered through both ESSA and Minnesota's World's Best Workforce legislation to have meaningful involvement and access to data so that they are well positioned to advocate for students and families.

[In summary, some of the ways Minnesota is ensuring that all students have equitable access to experienced, in-field, and effective teachers is by:](#)

- [Requiring that LEAs implement local strategies and publicly report on their strategies for ensuring equitable access.](#)
- [Collecting annual assurances from LEAs that local equitable access data has been publicly reported locally annually.](#)
- [Reporting statewide data on teacher experience, in-field teaching assignments, and advanced degree attainment.](#)
- [Requiring that no student is taught in two consecutive years by a teacher on an improvement plan under the local teacher evaluation system.](#)

Led by community organizations, local educational agencies and MDE, Minnesota is focused on the entire human capital continuum from increasing, improving and diversifying the teacher pipeline to supporting educators to better serve students of color, American Indian students and low-income students.

2. School Conditions (*ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(C)*): Describe how the SEA agency will support LEAs receiving assistance under Title I, Part A to improve school conditions for student learning, including through reducing: (i) incidences of bullying and harassment; (ii) the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and (iii) the use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is uniquely positioned to support the efforts of local educational agencies (LEAs)—districts, charters, intermediate districts, education cooperatives—to improve school conditions for student learning. MDE has staff with knowledge and extensive background in this area of work and brings a unique perspective and position to the table as an entity that can help build the capacity of local educational agencies to implement and sustain school climate improvement efforts, which include specific strategies to reduce bullying and harassment and student discipline.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

Minnesota’s bullying prevention and intervention law, the Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.031), provides educators, parents and youth with the tools and resources they need to prevent bullying and harassment. The law not only provides increased protections against bullying in Minnesota schools by requiring school staff to stop, intervene and investigate all reports of bullying, but places an emphasis on prevention by explicitly requiring efforts around school climate improvement and social emotional learning. The law established the School Safety Technical Assistance Center (safety center) at MDE and the School Safety Technical Assistance Council (council), two entities tasked with supporting schools, providing leadership for improving school climate and safety, and ensuring school climate improvement work flows throughout the state. The work of the center and council revolve around providing district-wide guidance, model policy, training and professional development and technical assistance to schools, families and community members on bullying and harassment prevention and intervention.

### **Discipline Practices**

Many local educational agencies in Minnesota are currently implementing a variety of schoolwide preventive and positive approaches to discipline. Three of the most successful and widely used approaches are restorative practices, social emotional learning (SEL), and schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS). These approaches are either being implemented all together, one on its own, or a combination of any two of the three.

The center provides local educational agencies support on implementing restorative practices and SEL as a central strategy for creating positive school climates. The center’s activities related to restorative practices include developing implementation guidance, provide training and technical assistance to local educational agencies, and building state capacity to support local educational agencies by increasing Minnesota’s train-the-trainer network. For SEL, the center is leading the development of statewide SEL guidance to provide local educational agencies with a framework for integrating SEL into teaching and learning practices. Included in the guidance are learning goals, benchmarks, sample activities and guidance on implementation, assessment, evaluation and professional development. The SEL guidance will be available to all local educational agencies

beginning the 2017-18 school year and follow-up support to local educational agencies, including training which will be provided by the center.

MDE's Special Education Division provides leadership to ensure a high-quality education for Minnesota's youth with disabilities and has led the state's schoolwide PBIS initiative since 2005. Schoolwide PBIS across multiple school buildings within the district helps improve consistency in behavioral practices and student experiences at school, particularly as they transition from one school building to the next. To date, 583 schools have participated in the state training, including 93 middle schools and 141 high schools or alternative learning centers.

Additionally, MDE staff are piloting support for students with disabilities who are black or American Indian in four large districts. Focusing on the evidence-based practice of Check & Connect, district and school capacity is supported to focus additional support on these particular student groups to increase school engagement, school success and graduation. These districts are also exploring the middle schools that feed the high schools so that they can identify students who need additional support early in their transition year of ninth grade.

MDE's division of Compliance and Assistance provides technical assistance and training to local educational agencies in the area of student rights and discipline. The student rights and discipline training provided in multiple regions of the state, encourages local educational agencies to consider current practices surrounding discipline. Using case studies in training encourages discussion and dialogue surrounding opportunities reducing the use of suspensions in schools, and includes an overview of discipline policy requirements, Minnesota Statutes, sections 121A.40 to 121A.56, student protections, and special education due process.

Beginning with the 2012-13 school year, and annually thereafter, MDE's Compliance and Assistance Division has convened the Restrictive Procedure Work Group to meet on a quarterly basis to develop a statewide plan with specific and measurable implementation and outcome goals for reducing the use of restrictive procedures in the school settings. This is aligned with Executive Orders 13-01 and 15-03, and Minnesota's Olmstead Plan's positive support goals addressing the school setting. MDE's staff provides technical assistance and training to local educational agencies in facilitating the reduction of the use of restrictive procedures. This training encourages discussion and dialogue on the use of positive behavioral interventions in lieu of physical holding and seclusion, and includes an overview of the statutory provisions pertaining to the use of restrictive procedures allowed only in emergency situations. MDE has posted positive support training modules on its website to help build local educational agencies' capacity in the use of positive supports.

3. School Transitions (*ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(D)*): Describe how the State will support LEAs receiving assistance under Title I, Part A in meeting the needs of students at all levels of schooling (particularly students in the middle grades and high school), including how the State will work with such LEAs to provide effective transitions of students to middle grades and high school to decrease the risk of students dropping out.

## **Planning for Students' and Families' Successful Transition between Early Childhood and K-12**

Since evidence suggests that early education experiences can have a powerful effect on students' later school and life outcomes, state and local policymakers have strong incentives for making the transition to kindergarten



as smooth and stress-free as possible for children and families.<sup>1</sup> While the planning of a stable, well-connected transition between an early childhood program and kindergarten falls largely within the purview of individual schools and districts, the Minnesota Department of Education is taking an active role in encouraging intentional, local efforts to smooth transition to kindergarten for families and students. The department and Child Care Aware of Minnesota are collaborating on a joint effort to develop and implement a sustainable service that will provide elementary school principals with the names and contact information of the early childhood programs in their school's enrollment area. The opportunity for elementary school principals and early childhood center directors to connect makes it more likely that principals will begin building relationships with students and families prior to kindergarten entry. This partnership is intended to help bridge communities and foster connections so that districts, in collaboration with childcare providers, can welcome students and their families to kindergarten, assess students' strengths, and share data across programs. This shared discussion of children's development and learning will better enable them to experience a successful kindergarten school year. Through its P3 Leadership Series, MDE is currently working with principal lead teams throughout the state to develop site plans that will focus on intentional P3 alignment activities including effective transition practices.

## **Planning for Students' Successful Transition to Postsecondary and Employment: Personal Learning Plans**

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.125, requires all students to have a personal learning plan around several key elements beginning no later than ninth grade. This plan should be looked at as a life plan that includes academic scheduling, career exploration, career and employment-related skills, community partnerships, college access, all forms of postsecondary training, and experiential learning opportunities. When assisting students in developing a plan, districts must recognize the unique possibilities of each student and ensure that the contents of each student's plan reflect the student's unique talents, skills and abilities as the student grows, develops and learns, which will encourage students to stay in school. The *Personal Learning Plans Toolkit*, developed by the Minnesota Department of Education, is a resource for teachers, counselors, parents and administrators to support student career and college readiness. Workshops and conference presentations have been presented around the state to assist districts in determining the means for implementing legislation, selecting resources, and reviewing and record keeping of the students' plans.

## **Support Our Students Grants**

In 2016, Minnesota legislation provided \$12,033,000 in grant funding over six years for schools to hire student support services personnel, which include Minnesota licensed school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses or chemical dependency counselors. The grant funding helps address shortages of student support services personnel within Minnesota schools, decreases caseloads for existing staff to ensure effective services, and ensures that students receive effective academic guidance and integrated and comprehensive services to improve kindergarten through grade 12 school outcomes and career and college

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<sup>1</sup> [Little, Michael H., Lora Cohen-Vogel, and F. Chris Curran. "Facilitating the Transition to Kindergarten." AERA Open 2, no. 3 \(2016\): 1-18.](#)

readiness. The grant also ensures that student support services personnel serve within the scope and practice of their training and licensure; fully integrates learning supports, instruction and school management within a comprehensive approach that facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration; and improves school safety and school climate to support academic success and career and college readiness. These support services personnel are critical for helping students who are on the verge of dropping out.

### **Minnesota Early Indicator and Response System (MEIRS)**

The Minnesota Department of Education has developed a screening tool to assist educators in tracking and supporting student progress toward graduation from high school. This tool provides a snapshot of students in grades six and nine who are at increased risk of not completing high school in four years. Using validated research-based variables associated with dropping out of school (such as attendance, multiple enrollments, state accountability test scores, and suspension/expulsion), supports can be developed and targeted to students who may need additional assistance to stay on track for graduation. These supports may include systemic responses as well as individual interventions. Once students are identified as being at risk of dropping out, teachers, counselors and community partners can intervene with targeted dropout prevention strategies. Trainings are offered to district personnel who will use the data to plan interventions, and a district team is encouraged to attend the trainings.

### **Alternative Learning**

Minnesota has provided options for students who need an alternative path to a high school diploma. According to Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.68, districts are able to apply to operate state-approved alternative programs (SAAPs). There are three types of SAAPs: 1) Area learning centers, which must be established between two or more districts excluding Minneapolis, St. Paul or Duluth; 2) alternative learning programs, which can be established by a single district; and, 3) contract alternative programs, which are operated by a private organization that holds a contract with the district to serve their at-risk students. There are other requirements for SAAPs that are detailed in the Annual Report on Learning Year Programs. Access the full report from the MDE [2017 Legislative Reports page](#).

Minnesota has also allocated additional funding to serve these students in out-of-school-time programs. This additional time is designed to help students gain the skills and knowledge they need to be on track to graduate with their peers. Minnesota will fund an additional 20 percent of the minimum core school year hours for these out-of-school time (extended-learning) programs.

### **Early/Middle College Programs**

An early/middle college program is a partnership between a state-approved alternative program and an eligible postsecondary institution, which is specifically designed to offer high school students well-defined pathways to postsecondary degrees and credentials. This unique model opens a door for traditionally at-risk students by providing them the opportunity to earn dual credit with intentional academic and wraparound supports offered by the partnership—an option that was formerly not available for this population of students. Further, Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, subdivision 9, allows these programs to access funding for developmental coursework, if needed.

## Rigorous Course Taking

Challenging, rigorous learning opportunities are essential to prepare students for success in postsecondary institutions and career options. The Minnesota Legislature has appropriated funding to support the development and growth of the following programs: Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), concurrent enrollment, and postsecondary enrollment options (PSEO). These programs are designed to offer pathways, preparation for the world beyond high school, and opportunities for high school students to earn free college credit. The programs continue to increase in both student enrollment and success for Minnesota students.

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.13, appropriates funding specifically for AP and IB student exam fee reimbursements as well as teacher training. Courses taken through the PSEO program and concurrent enrollment are supported through separate funding formulas, with PSEO payments made to postsecondary institutions, and concurrent enrollment reimbursements provided directly to participating school districts (Minn. Stat. §§ 124D.09 and 124D.091).

The Minnesota commissioner of education must submit a report to the Legislature each year which includes information on rigorous course taking, disaggregated by student group, school district and postsecondary institution. The *Rigorous Course Taking Report* describes specifics and progress of AP, IB, concurrent enrollment and PSEO programs, including recent trends, recommendations and expenditures. Access the full report from the MDE [2017 Legislative Reports page](#).

## Online Learning

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.095, provides Minnesota K-12 students the opportunity to enroll in supplemental or comprehensive online learning programs from one of our 32 state-approved providers. Supplemental online enrollment allows students to access a broader range of course offerings and provides flexibility in a student's schedule while they continue to take courses from their resident district and work toward graduation. A diverse array of comprehensive online schools provide students with a variety of options for their full-time enrollment. Comprehensive programs provide all services to students including special education, student support and issuance of diplomas. Online learning provides a personalized, flexible, supportive approach to help all students be successful.

In 2015-16, 17,706 students participated in online options. Of those, 9,710 students enrolled in comprehensive programs. Students with autism in particular are choosing online learning at higher rates. Online enrollments for students with autism make up 20 percent of the total population of online students receiving special education services.

## Career and College Readiness Measure on Transcripts

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, requires districts, schools, and charter schools to record a student's progress toward career and college readiness on the student's high school transcript. For purposes of accountability, Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, subdivision 1, paragraph (k), states that a student is college and career ready if they are able to successfully complete credit-bearing coursework at a two- or four-year

college or university or other credit-bearing postsecondary program without need for remediation. Districts, schools and charter schools select measures of progress that are appropriate for their students and report that progress on the high school transcript in the method they see fit. These measures will help the districts determine which students need assistance to ensure readiness and help prevent students from being unsuccessful and dropping out.

## **Career Technical Education (CTE) / Career Development**

### **Carl D. Perkins**

Career Technical Education (CTE) is supported by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV). This federal grant is distributed to state-approved career and technical education programs with appropriate teacher licensure. Funds are granted to districts and consortia of districts on a formula basis. They can be used for professional development or career counseling and guidance and to promote student attainment of academic and technical skills, upgrade equipment or provide school- and work-based experiences. Minnesota's state plan focuses on five goal areas:

1. Designing and implementing programs of study.
2. Effectively utilizing employer, community, and education partnerships.
3. Improving service to special populations.
4. Continuum of service provision for enabling student transitions.
5. Sustaining the consortium.

The Carl D. Perkins Act requires states to meet negotiated performance indicators in the area of student participation in and completion of CTE programs that are nontraditional by gender. Targets are negotiated annually, and states must meet their targets within 90 percent of the agreed-upon level or develop an improvement plan for the following year. Support for these student success indicators includes assistance identifying strategies to improve participation and completion of males and females in programs that are nontraditional by gender, training for instructors and counselors, or assistance with the development of an improvement plan for these indicators.

CTE programs are administered under Minnesota Rules Chapter 3505, and the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and are also supported by the CTE levy, which is a permissive levy for school districts to provide extra support based, in part, on the district's CTE expenditures. Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.4531, states that a district with an approved CTE program is eligible for career and technical revenue equal to 35 percent of approved expenditures in the fiscal year in which the levy is certified.

### **Work-Based Learning**

Work-Based Learning (WBL) provides formalized learning which consists of instruction that occurs concurrently at a school and a worksite. It is an instructional strategy that prepares students for success in careers and college and involves a sequential building of knowledge and skills that provide opportunities for student to build career awareness. Employers benefit from the opportunity to nurture student interest in jobs and careers within their companies, jobs in their communities, and/or in their industry. WBL programs are approved by the Office of Career and College Success at the Minnesota Department of Education. All state-approved WBL experiences require a written agreement and training plan between school, employer, student, and parent or guardian. In

some instances, WBL experiences may provide postsecondary credit and credentials. Students in WBL experiences must be supervised by a licensed work-based learning teacher in a state-approved work-based learning program.

### **Access to Career Technical Education for Students with Disabilities (ACTE-SPED)**

Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.08, requires that no later than grade nine, the individualized education program (IEP) must address a student's need for transition from secondary services to postsecondary education and training, employment, community participation, recreation and leisure and home living.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.454, provides a method to fund components of a student's IEP through Access to Career and Technical Education for Students with a Disability (ACTE-SPED, formerly referred to as Transition-Disabled). ACTE-SPED is designed for students who require curriculum modifications and other supplemental services to participate in CTE programs. A student selected for this program must meet the state definition of a child with a disability per Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.02.

Activities around personal and career awareness are approved activities under either special education or ACTE-SPED law. As students with disabilities enter grades 11 and 12, their IEPs may reflect education and training leading to the outcome of competitive, integrated employment. Being prepared starts with exploring careers that interest each student. All students need information on career fields, clusters and pathways available in Minnesota. Within these experiences, students can participate in career assessments to identify post-high school options in employment. Activities may include industry-focused speakers, workplace tours, job shadowing, informational interview experiences and WBL experiences.

### **Career and College Planning Tools**

The Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) is a fee-based, online subscription system that offers career, educational and labor market information in one comprehensive, easy-to-use tool. MCIS includes learning styles, employability, interest and skill assessments; information on colleges; and program requirements for various occupations. Students build portfolios so they can plan and track progress toward their educational goals and create Personal Learning Plans, as required by Minnesota law. New versions have been created for special education, adult basic education, and the Minnesota Department of Corrections. Optional components such as ACT and college placement and practice tests may also be added. MCIS is used by schools, colleges, libraries and many community-based organizations. The system is updated annually to ensure that the information is current and reliable.

A federal grant allowed Minnesota to build Ready Set Go MN, an access and equity website, which utilizes the power of technology to inform, support and engage underrepresented students and their families in participating and succeeding in rigorous courses and postsecondary opportunities. The website also details steps for students and families to take for career and college exploration with a list of valuable links for Minnesota programs.

## Check & Connect

MDE staff are piloting support for students with disabilities who are black or American Indian in four large districts. By focusing on the evidence-based practice of Check & Connect, districts and schools can provide additional support on particular student groups to increase school engagement, school success, and graduation. These districts are also exploring the middle schools that feed the high schools so that they can identify students who need additional support early in their transition year of ninth grade.

Check & Connect is an evidence-based intervention used with K-12 students who show warning signs of disengagement with school and who are at risk of dropping out. At the core of Check & Connect is a trusting relationship between the student and a caring, trained mentor who both advocates for and challenges the student to keep education salient. Students are referred to Check & Connect when they show warning signs of disengaging from school, such as poor attendance, behavioral issues and low grades.

In Check & Connect, the "check" component refers to the process where mentors systematically monitor student performance variables (e.g., absences, tardiness, behavioral referrals, grades), while the "connect" component refers to mentors providing personalized, timely interventions to help students solve problems, build skills and enhance competence. Mentors work with caseloads of students and families for at least two years, functioning as liaisons between home and school and striving to build constructive family-school relationships.