College & Career Pathways in Minnesota

A Cross-Agency Initiative to Promote Education and Workforce Development

Achieving the vision of a comprehensive and integrated education and workforce development system in Minnesota requires interconnecting state education, employment training, and social service agencies to promote coordination and efficiency. Systems must be flexible to allow for individuals’ entry and exit at multiple points and ages, and aligned so that students make seamless transitions across educational levels and programs. State employers and labor partners also must be engaged to ensure that Minnesotans attain the industry-recognized certificates, credentials, and degrees that position Minnesota to compete in a global environment.

Achieving the Vision
Advancing Career Technical Education in Career Pathway Systems

In January 2013 the U.S. Department of Education awarded Minnesota State Colleges and Universities in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development three-years of technical assistance to support career pathway system alignment. A cross-agency leadership team has been assembled with representation from across the state’s public K–12, postsecondary, adult education and workforce development offices, and employer and stakeholder groups committed to improving Minnesota’s education and economic climate.

Representatives from Rochester Public Schools, Rochester Community and Technical College, Workforce Development, Inc., Rochester Adult Basic Education, Mayo Clinic, and Bowman Tool have been recruited as local partners.

Team members are currently working across departments and agencies in an unprecedented effort to strengthen existing career pathways resources and integrate state educational, employment training, and human service offerings. This effort addresses the following elements:

- **Strengthening cross-system partnerships** to align program services and establish policy and legislation to support statewide systems alignment.
- **Redesigning communications strategies** to engage employers in key state industries, building on state Itasca Study pilots underway and Rochester area initiatives to develop career pathways.
- **Building cross-system data and accountability systems** to motivate accountability and program improvement, utilizing the framework from the Alliance for Quality in Career Pathways and information available from SLDS, WDQI and other initiatives in Minnesota.

The cross-agency, state leadership team is collaborating to promote a comprehensive and unified career pathway system. Team members serve on numerous statewide career pathways (see appendix) to ensure project work coordinates with other, ongoing state efforts. The goal is to coordinate with Minnesota Career Pathway work underway to leverage existing resources and coordinate resource use to achieve system sustainability. The team’s work should ensure that all Minnesotans can access high quality, coordinated education and training services so that they can secure gainful employment and the skills that will prepare them for successful advancement along their career pathways.
Working Definitions

A career pathway system in Minnesota is defined as a statewide partnership of agencies, organizations, and employers/industry that provides leadership, coordination, and a supportive policy environment for local/regional/state career pathways systems and programs and that promotes the quality, scale, and sustainability of career pathways.

A career pathway program in Minnesota is defined as a series of connected education and/or training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certificates or recognized credentials and obtain employment within an occupational area and advance to higher levels of future education and employment in that area.

Career Pathway Work Underway in Minnesota

Minnesota is working on many fronts to create a comprehensive career pathway system for youth and adults through aligned workforce development and education services.

Advancing CTE in Career Pathways
OVAE technical assistance initiative – through September 2015

Career and College Readiness Collaborative
(MDE, DEED, MnSCU and community partners) to help youth explore college and career interests and develop a plan for a smooth and successful transition to postsecondary education or employment-- ongoing.

Career Pathways and Technical Education Task Force

Charting the Future
Report of the Strategic Workgroup’s recommendations to increase access, affordability, excellence, and service by forging deeper collaborations among our colleges and universities to maximize our collective strengths, resources, and the talents of our faculty and staff. MnSCU Board of Trustees, November 2013.

Minnesota Technical Skill Assessments
Core competencies (secondary and postsecondary) and state approved technical skill assessments validated by business and industry in US Department of Education and Department of Labor Career Pathways and Clusters; completion by August 2014.

Common Core Standardsw

Governors Workforce Development Council
Career Pathways Committee focus initially on definition/current work and then to policy development through March 2014.

Skills@Work
Greater Twin Cities United Way and the Governor’s Workforce Development Council Campaign to address regional workforce needs and develop statewide policy recommendations to address state skill needs (2012-2013).

Labor Market Information
LMI Data Production Requirement legislation HF 729 Sec. 2 lines 63.19-64.18

For more information

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1 All Hands on Deck: Fifteen Ideas for Strengthening Minnesota’s Workforce, 2012 Governor’s Workforce Development Council www.gwdc.org