

Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

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1. Use of Funds (*ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(A) and (D)*): Describe how the State educational agency will use Title II, Part A funds received under Title II, Part A for State-level activities described in section 2101(c), including how the activities are expected to improve student achievement.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will use Title II, Part A funds for administration (not more than 1 percent of the amount allotted to the state) and for specific state activities designed to support improvements in teaching and learning.

Research has regularly shown that the number one school-based factor impacting student achievement is the overall quality of the teacher in the classroom, followed closely by the quality of the school principal.

Consequently, Minnesota will pursue state activities designed to support local educational agencies (LEAs) – districts, charters, intermediate districts, education cooperatives – to develop, support and improve our teacher and principal educator workforce. State activity funds will be used to provide professional development, technical assistance, guidance, examples, and other forms of support for local educational agencies in a variety of areas.

- Assistance to LEAs to improve the design and implementation of principal and teacher development and evaluation systems.
- Assistance to LEAs to improve the design and implementation of career advancement or teacher leadership opportunities that include but would not be limited to instructional coaching, mentoring and program leadership.
- Assistance to LEAs to improve the design and implementation of performance-based alternative compensation models, and teacher recruitment and retention strategies.
- Assistance to LEAs to improve the design and implementation of induction and mentoring programs and high-quality professional development programs through Minnesota’s staff development requirements.
- Overall, providing training, technical assistance, and capacity building to local education agencies that receive Title II, Part A funds.
- Assistance to LEAs that will enable elementary school principals to identify and connect with all the community-based early childhood programs to allow for intentional transition strategies to be implemented.

The state activities listed above align well with Minnesota’s Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System (ATPPS, commonly known as Q Comp). ATPPS is an optional teacher effectiveness program in which over half of LEAs in the state participate. ATPPS requires LEAs to establish formal teacher leadership structures, job-embedded professional learning opportunities, teacher evaluation systems based on classroom observations and student outcomes, and performance-based compensation systems.

Minnesota will also reserve 3 percent of the amount reserved for subgrants to local education agencies to provide principal networks, communities of practice and other professional development and technical assistance activities focusing on instructional leadership and equity. Assistance may include support for LEAs to develop and implement a high-quality professional development programs for principals that enable principals to be effective and prepare all students meet challenging state academic standards.

The nature of Minnesota's educator effectiveness work is to create professional learning systems where teachers and principals continuously improve their practices which, in turn, leads to improved student outcomes. LEAs with strong professional learning systems that utilize high-quality performance evaluations that include student outcome measures will be better able to meet student needs. Consequently, Minnesota's use of Title II funds will focus on supporting LEAs to improve professional learning conditions in their system.

2. Use of Funds to Improve Equitable Access to Teachers in Title I, Part A Schools (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(E)): If an SEA plans to use Title II, Part A funds to improve equitable access to effective teachers, consistent with ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B), describe how such funds will be used for this purpose.

An option under Minnesota's Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System (ATPPS, commonly known as Q Comp) is to use ATPPS revenue to establish hiring bonuses, to incentivize teachers to gain additional certification, or to fund grow-your-own programs in order to address teacher shortage issues. These state funds could be leveraged to improve equitable access to effective and diverse teachers. MDE staff supporting the ATPPS program with state Title II, Part A dollars will support participating LEAs to make use of this option under that program.

3. System of Certification and Licensing (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(B)): Describe the State's system of certification and licensing of teachers, principals, or other school leaders.

Minnesota's system of licensing of teachers, principals or other school leaders is outlined in Minnesota Statute and Administrative Rule. The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) is responsible for licensing teachers and the Board of School Administrators (BOSA) is responsible for licensing principals and other school leaders. The statutes relating to teacher and other educators is found in [Chapter 122A](#). The administrative rules for teachers are found in Administrative Rule [Chapter 8710](#) and the rules for principals and other school leaders are found in [Chapter 3512](#).

Legislation passed in May 2017 created the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) to oversee and implement teacher licensing for the state of Minnesota. This legislation consolidates the current responsibilities carried out by two state agencies, the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Board of Teaching. Consolidation is effective January 1, 2018. PELSB will be responsible for: (1) developing the teacher's code of ethics; (2) adopting rules to license public school teachers; (3) adopting rules for and approving teacher preparation programs; (4) issuing or denying license applications; (5) suspending, revoking, or denying a license based on qualifying grounds; and, (6) verifying of district and charter school licensure compliance. Beginning July 1, 2018, PELSB will implement a new tiered licensure system which provides different pathways to licensure.

The legislation passed that created PELSB did not change the duties or the licensing structure of the Board of School Administrators (BOSA). BOSA duties include: (1) licensing of Minnesota school administrators; (2)

processing requests for licensure variance; (3) reviewing and approving preparation programs for school administrators and alternative programs for administrators; (4) processing requests for issuing continuing educational units (CEUs or clock hours) for educational administrative professional development; (5) enforcing and advising school administrators in the code of ethics covering standards of professional practice; and, (6) proposing rulemaking. BOSA contracts with PELSB to process and issue licensures and licensure compliance.

Minnesota approved teacher preparation programs have general requirements including: field-specific teaching methods, at least 12 weeks of student teaching, human relations coursework, pedagogy training, reading strategies, technology strategies, supporting English learners and field experience prior to student teaching. In addition to these general requirements, teachers must meet content-specific standards as well as pass related testing requirements including: content tests, pedagogy tests and basic skills exams.

4. Improving Skills of Educators (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(J)): Describe how the SEA will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in order to enable them to identify students with specific learning needs, particularly children with disabilities, English learners, students who are gifted and talented, and students with low literacy levels, and provide instruction based on the needs of such students.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) provides a variety of **services** to improve the skills of teachers, principals and other school leaders. The following summaries highlight a few of the many ways in which MDE works with educators. For more information about these and other supports for schools, [visit the Minnesota Department of Education website](#).

Special Education

The Special Education Division and the Early Childhood Special Education Team at the Minnesota Department of Education provide ongoing robust professional development in special education through multiple activities. Team members support professional development for directors of special education through quarterly directors' forums which provide information on best and emerging practices in supporting students with disabilities. Staff help support emerging leadership among special education directors, to ensure skills in special education best practices are addressed.

The Special Education Division has a federal State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) to support our State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) implementation work. This work includes exploring and selecting an evidence-based practice, training school staff in the practice, and measuring the extent to which the practice is implemented, to systematically include identifying the needs of students related to learning and other factors linked to increased graduation rates for black and American Indian students with disabilities (e.g., attendance and credit accrual). The quality of training and coaching, the fidelity of implementation, and student outcomes are systematically evaluated with tools and metrics from the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), as is fidelity of implementation and student outcomes.

Staff provides support and professional development for educators through multiple activities, including direct face-to-face instruction, webinar series, support for statewide and regional communities of practice of special educators, information dissemination through listservs, wikis, and other digital modalities, and a regional comprehensive system of professional development which supports access to professional development in all regions of the state specific to supports students with disabilities.

In addition, staff works to implement and scale-up evidence-based practices in identifying the learning needs of students with disabilities, including person-centered planning, preparation for competitive and integrated employment, and protocols for reintegration of students with disabilities returning to their school districts from correctional facilities. In addition, staff is working in innovative areas, including the identification of students with specific learning needs, and the provision of specialized instruction, accommodations and related services to students with disabilities in online learning programs. Through the federal SPDG, staff is also coordinating professional development in school districts for early identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and early identification of developmental learning needs.

Finally, special education staff sponsors a weeklong literacy camp each year which teaches strategies to support literacy access for struggling readers to Minnesota educators who become mentors and coaches in their local education agency. Staff also provides support for Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) instruction for teachers of students who are deaf/hard of hearing, as these students have unique needs in developing literacy and language.

English Learners

English learner (EL) staff at the MDE partners with stakeholders to improve the skills of teachers and principals in identifying and providing instruction based on the strengths and needs of English learners across the continuum of English language proficiency levels. EL staff works with stakeholders to provide technical assistance, education conferences, training sessions, meetings and online content to develop the capacity of school and district staff to use asset-based frameworks to provide instruction and support that acknowledges and builds on the linguistic and cultural strengths of English learners.

Additionally, the Minnesota Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success Act (LEAPS) is a state law that provides an assurance that all Minnesota teachers and administrators possess the knowledge and skills needed to provide appropriate instruction to ELs to support and accelerate ELs in academic literacy, including oral academic language, and achievement in content areas in a regular classroom setting.

MDE English learner staff partners with a variety of organizations to create support opportunities for teachers and school leaders. Examples are as follows:

- MDE staff partners with Minnesota Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (MinneTESOL) in carrying out the Minnesota English Learner Education Conference attended by over 1,200 educators and administrators each year and featuring nationally known speakers and local experts sharing examples of how to celebrate the strengths and meet the needs of all ELs across the state and the region.
- MDE staff partners with service cooperatives around the state to offer sessions that include a focus on supporting the needs of English learners enrolled in Title I, II and III programs.
- MDE staff partners with the Minnesota Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs (MAASFEP) to offer sessions for educators and administrators in meeting the needs of ELs
- MDE staff partners with institutes of higher education to develop publically available online modules that lift up the linguistic and cultural strengths of students with limited and interrupted formal education (SLIFE), while proving practical strategies for identifying such students and better meeting their instructional needs.
- MDE staff collaborates with school and district leaders to provide continuing education opportunities that focus on recognizing the talents and meeting the needs of all ELs. These sessions are regularly

offered at conferences and events sponsored by Minnesota ASCD, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association.

- MDE and WIDA staff offer numerous workshops and archived webinars to teachers and administrators on how they can use the Minnesota/WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework to provide instruction based on the strengths and needs of ELs in pre-K through grade 12.
- MDE Early Learning Services Division staff is specifically working with WIDA Early Years staff to illustrate the connections between the revised and expanded Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards and the WIDA Early English Language Development Standards. In addition, MDE will contract with WIDA to provide additional training to our original WIDA Early Years Trainer Cohort and new trainers. This training expands the number and type of training available to early care and education teachers that introduces them to the WIDA core values, mission and approaches to supporting, instructing and assessing dual language learners (DLLs) as well as partnering with families.
- MDE staff works with higher education, community partners, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), and Infinetec to produce and publish a series of six two-hour videos to assist superintendents and their staff in meeting the needs of all English learners.
- MDE staff has partnered with the Equity Alliance of Minnesota (formerly EMID), the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MNEEP) and district staff to offer the EL Leadership Summit, and education conference designed to support district and school leaders to better identify the strengths and meet the needs of all English learners.

Gifted and Talented

MDE provides numerous professional development opportunities for educators and school leaders that build capacity to recognize and respond to the needs of gifted, talented and highly able learners. In addition to providing technical assistance via technology, MDE offers these opportunities:

- An annual two-day workshop for gifted education coordinators and specialists provides a review of legislation and best practices in the areas of identification of students for services, program models, affective needs and instructional strategies.
- An annual one-day workshop on the identification of traditionally under-represented students for gifted programs.
- Various one-day workshops at the department and at education cooperatives focus on specific areas of interest (e.g. reporting updates, school policy creation, acceleration of instruction, self-regulation, and twice-exceptional learners (gifted and special education).
- An annual four-day summer symposium provides an opportunity for educators, counselors, administrators and parents to gain greater understanding of the unique needs of gifted and high-potential learners. Participants attend in-depth sessions focusing on foundational knowledge, creativity, instructional strategies, affective needs, and specific content areas.
- Quarterly network meetings for providers of full-time programs for gifted learners.

The Minnesota Department of Education is also the recipient of a three-year Javits Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Our grant, Project North Star intends to elevate identification and systems of support for underserved gifted learners by training teachers, school leaders, and families/communities. The project provides free, relevant professional development modules for teachers and administrators created by nationally renowned experts; as well as free educational, family, and community resources of lasting value. Selection criteria for pilot schools includes rural location, high poverty rate, high American Indian population and strong school leadership. Materials created by the grant will be housed on the department website and available to all.

Early Learning

The Division of Early Learning Services works to support the planning, implementing and evaluating of a set of interlocking programs and supports across the first eight years of life designed to improve the social/emotional and cognitive outcomes of young, at-risk children living in communities throughout Minnesota. By doing so, district and community leadership/administration will have an expanded knowledge base that includes early childhood development and age-appropriate best practice in curriculum, instruction, assessment and use of data. In addition, authentic partnerships with families and communities will exist that will enhance the delivery of comprehensive services through a linked 0-8 early care and education system.

Our division's focus is to work to build strong leadership, relationships and capacity necessary to engage districts and communities in a cycle of continuous improvement by:

- Enhancing state/regional system of P3 leadership and professional development.
- Expanding access to high-quality education, services and instructional time for all children.
- Strengthening and aligning instruction, assessment, and curriculum to pre-K through third grade standards.
- Identifying best practices for family and community engagement and create resources and guidance to support practice.
- Promoting strategies that will ensure the state has a highly skilled workforce to meet the staffing needs of early childhood programs.
- Using data to inform policy, planning, practice and professional development.

Reading

Literacy staff at MDE partners with statewide literacy organizations to provide guidance and professional development to educational leaders and educators to support identification and remediation of students with low literacy levels.

- MDE staff partners with the Minnesota Reading Association and the Minnesota Center for Reading Research to lead the Leadership in Reading Network (LiRN). The network includes schoolwide literacy coaches, district literacy coordinators, administrators and other Minnesota educators who support teachers and administrators in building capacity and developing literacy programs founded on research-based best practices through a series of three daylong workshops and book club.
- MDE works in collaboration with the Minnesota Writing Project to provide professional development on the ELA standards, best practices, and research-based instructional strategies for K-12 teachers, literacy specialists, and administrators. Writing project teachers demonstrate lessons, share resources and provide networking opportunities to participants.
- MDE is a collaborator in Minnesota's Higher Education Literacy Partnership (HELP), a collaborative, multi-organizational effort designed to improve the educational experiences and reading proficiencies of Minnesota's students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties. HELP works to improve the reading performance of struggling readers through professional development that fosters high-quality teacher preparation throughout Minnesota's institutions of higher education through a Distinguished Scholar's Symposium and a summer book club.
- Minnesota districts are required to develop a local literacy plan to ensure that all students have achieved early reading proficiency by no later than the end of third grade. While plan development is left up to local control, MDE staff provides guidance to support districts' plans for student identification, reporting, provision of intervention, and staff development.

- The department is developing the Minnesota Standards Portal, an online resource designed to support districts' development of standards-based educational systems to be implemented in 2018. This guidance and resources develop local capacity to build support structures, utilize processes for continuous improvement, guide curriculum development, and implement evidence-based practices.
- The Regional Centers of Excellence deploy reading specialists to work with the state's identified low-performing schools. Specialists work with leadership to support continuous improvement processes, data and root cause analysis processes, provide literacy expertise, and address inequities.
- The department offers free e-learning opportunities to assist educators in unpacking Minnesota's English language arts standards and benchmarks.
- Department staff offers sessions on literacy at regional and state conferences throughout the year.
- Minnesota provides funding to ServeMinnesota for delivery of the Minnesota Reading Corps, a program that provides full- and part-time tutors to work with struggling readers on development of foundational skills in schools across the state.

Regional Centers of Excellence

As described in multiple responses in the Title I section of Minnesota's consolidated state plan, the Regional Centers of Excellence (RCE) provide on-the-ground support to identified schools and districts as part of our statewide system of support. Each Regional Center employs school advocates who are specialists in reading, math, English learners, special education, implementation, and equity. Each advocate has a colleague at MDE who is responsible for building the specialist capacity of the advocate so that schools receive consistent and aligned messages from both MDE and Regional Center personnel. Together, the specialist groups examine best practices in their field, discuss training and implementation, address challenges, and overall work to improve the skills of teachers and school leaders.

5. Data and Consultation (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(K)): Describe how the State will use data and ongoing consultation as described in ESEA section 2101(d)(3) to continually update and improve the activities supported under Title II, Part A.

Minnesota regularly consults with a variety of stakeholders across a number of initiatives. Specific to teacher and school leader effectiveness, stakeholder workgroups and advisory committees across the birth through grade 12 learning continuum have meaningfully consulted with MDE to:

- Design and pilot the state model for principal development and evaluation.
- Provide direction for the creation of tools supporting principals and principal supervisors.
- Design and pilot the state model for teacher development and evaluation.
- Make recommendations to the legislature to align Minnesota's alternative teacher professional pay system (ATPPS) and teacher development and evaluation requirements.
- Analyze equitable access data and recommend strategies to inform the Minnesota's equitable access plan.

In addition to these formal and intentional consultations with stakeholders, MDE team members regularly solicit input from the schools they serve by collecting program evaluation data, surveying stakeholders, leading and participating in on-site technical assistance.

We are proud of the relationships we have built with professional organizations representing teachers, school and district leaders, with regional service providers and with other stakeholder groups. From time to time, when

we are presented with a technical or adaptive challenge in the area of teacher and school leader effectiveness, we are able to pick up the phone and solve problems with our partners in the field and in the communities.

MDE has a variety of cross-agency teams dedicated to supporting teachers and school leaders, pre-K through grade 12. One such team is the cross-agency implementation team (CAIT) whose primary focus is to provide cross-agency program support for our Regional Centers of Excellence. Another team is the academic success team, comprised of the directors of school support, academic standards and instructional effectiveness, early learning, accountability, federal programs and college and career success, who each report to the chief academic officer. The academic success team is focused on coordination and alignment of state activities described in this section and several other activities conducted in the state.

6. Teacher Preparation (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(M)): Describe the actions the State may take to improve preparation programs and strengthen support for teachers, principals, or other school leaders based on the needs of the State, as identified by the SEA.

Currently the Minnesota Board of Teaching—and beginning January 1, 2018, the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board—oversees, reviews and approves teacher preparation providers (referred to as units) and teacher preparation licensure programs (referred to as programs). Minnesota Rule 8705.1000 lists the numerous categories a unit must show evidence of meeting. This process allows the state to provide direct feedback to units to direct them toward continuous improvement.

Minnesota Rule 8710.2000-2200 describes the standards and process for new programs to become state-approved and for current programs to move through the biennial renewal. This process focuses on a continuous improvement model where the programs share internal and external data and describe the process and results of their own analysis and discussions around this data. If any concerns arise in the review of data, a program review panel (made up of 13 stakeholders in teacher education) reviews the renewal application. Feedback from this review and subsequent board action is meant to provide direction to programs in the areas where they should focus their improvement efforts. The process also allows the state to place a program on an “improvement focus” or “probationary” status when concerns are evident.

State legislation passed in 2015 (Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.09, subdivision 4) requires units to provide a set of data points collected for a public data summary report. The state has built an electronic data collection system meant to assist units in submitting these data. While the public data can have multiple uses for stakeholders, the board continues to advocate for using these data toward continuous improvement efforts within units and programs.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) also provides support for teachers, principals and other school leaders as described in greater detail in responses to previous questions in this section. MDE staff also supports a variety of educator effectiveness work in schools through development and evaluation systems.

Minnesota law requires districts to develop and evaluate teachers and principals based on certain criteria, and MDE staff regularly provides consultation and technical assistance in the creation and implementation of evaluation systems. Understanding the crucial role principals play in directly and indirectly influencing student achievement, MDE provides resources and direction to principals and their supervisors for use in growth-focused principal development and evaluation, and for use in principals’ work as instructional leaders. Also,

Minnesota law provides funding for the Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System (ATPPS, commonly known as “Q Comp”) which is an optional teacher effectiveness program in which over half of LEAs in the state participate. ATPPS requires LEAs to establish formal teacher leadership structures, job-embedded professional learning opportunities, teacher evaluation systems based on classroom observations and student outcomes, and performance pay. LEAs may also use ATPPS revenue to establish hiring bonuses, to incentivize teachers to gain additional certification, or to fund “grow your own” programs in order to address teacher shortage issues. State example models, professional development opportunities, tools and other resources are available for all of the above educator effectiveness efforts.